$1.50 April 21, 1989

COMMONWEAL

#0079978N #015 8912
ST CHARLES SEM LIB
CARTHAGENA STA
CELINA OH 45822

MURIEL SPARK
Writing with Intent
ROBERT E. HOSMER, Jr.

St. Charles Seminary Library
Carthagena, Ohio

THE BISHOPS GO TO ROME
Joseph McNeal

CENTRAL AMERICA

LINDA ROBINSON on El Salvador

THE EDITORS on Central American Accords

REVIEWS

WAYNE A. MEEKS on Peter Brown

MARY PAT KELLY on Elizabeth Shannon and Madonna Kolbenschlag

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE Catholic "Fundamentalists"?

AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

The big distinction

Annandale, Va.

To the Editors: I found John Coleman's recent article ["Who are the Catholic "Fundamentalists'?" January 27] to be both provocative and insightful. And while I think he has done an exceptional job, he has overlooked the distinction so fundamental to and so determinative of Catholic church life: the division of the church into clergy and lay.

A social science perspective would show Catholic integralism to be linked to that ongoing struggle for position and power that is intrinsic to societies wherein divisions like that of lay/clergy exist. History shows that, from time to time, clergy have not been above manipulating laity to secure their own advantage....I would argue that "creeping infallibilism" has been made possible in large part by the failure of the hierarchy not only to make it absolutely clear to the lay members of the church that there are indeed prescribed boundaries and limits to papal and episcopal infallibility, but more importantly, a failure to spell out precisely what these limits are. For, despite the fact that this is a matter of faith, there has hardly been a thorough or continuing catechetical effort on the subject of the infallibility of the church. By allowing a climate of confusion and misunderstanding to prevail among the laity, it is easy for church officials to claim an authority for their teaching (even if only implicitly) that such may not warrant. Within the body of the hierarchy itself is sharp disagreement over the proper reaches of papal, episcopal, and curial authority....

Neither have laity been reticent to use clergy to achieve their own specific purposes. Laity have not only sought official church support in order to cloak with the aura of the divine what are public, political, and social agendas; this has also been done in deliberate awareness that causes having the affection and commitment of the clergy stand a far better chance of winning acceptance, both within the church and without. Coleman himself cites several examples of this....Movements like *Opus Dei, Communiono e Liberacion*, and CUF could not exist if they did not have a solid measure of lay commitment and impressive financial support, the one ecclesial resource on which the lay church does hold the upper hand.

While Coleman is to be congratulated for his clear explanation of the threat that integralism poses for our ecclesial life, the necessary remedy will not be "a new, good Benedict XV to warn us again of its dangers and to call a halt to its insidious growth."

...The truth is, most laity—and rightfully so—earnestly wish for a synthetic vision of Catholic life, especially one capable of positing religious meaning for their everyday life in the world. What is wanted above all is an account of Christian reality that presents a comprehensive, meaning-filled alternative to those materialist, consumerist views pressed on us by contemporary American culture. Similarly, many clergy...need to be reassured and convinced anew that their unique charism is truly indispensable to the church's life and mission. Laity, too, need to be convinced of this, for after all, it is only from the laity that the ordained come.

Identification and resolution of integralism's causes then is indispensable if laity and clergy are to engage in the collaborative task of evangelizing the modern world.

GEORGIA MASTERS KEIGHTLEY

Brilliant confusion

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: John A. Coleman's piece seems brilliantly confused. His reasoning seems to be that some Catholics are fundamentalists because they are "integralists." Integralists appear to be groups he dislikes, or at least doesn't agree with, whether they are within the fold or (like Lefebvre's followers) outside; and even if they fail to fit the integralist definition and refuse to accept the integralist label.

Instead of pasting people with pejorative labels, wouldn't it have been clearer to compare the activities of each so-called integralist group with his definition of the term? Namecalling may be fun but what good comes of a pastiche painted by an artist gone berserk instead of presentation of a coherent whole picture?

Father Coleman defends modernism and definitely does not like integralism particularly because of what those integralists did to the modernists in times past. "Bureaucratic insurgency," "a highly polemical form of discourse," and spying are part of their "reign of terror." Ironically he even takes a swipe at the use of terms that were not "value neutral."

Father Coleman likes "democratic voluntarism" ("a thousand points of light"?), Archbishop Hunthausen, Rev. Richard McBrien, and "progressive Catholics" (including Charles Curran?).

Father Coleman doesn't like *inter alia* Opus Dei, Catholics United for the Faith, anti-Communism, The *Wanderer*, etc., etc.

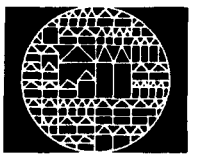
(Continued on page 253)

Commonweal is indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Catholic Periodical Index, Index of American Periodical Verse, Book Review Digest and Book Review Index. Microfilm from Vol. 1, 1924, to current issues available through University Microfilm, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and on Microfiche from Bell & Howell, Wooster, Ohio 44691. Serials Data program No.: ISSN 0010-3330. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. Copyright © 1989 Commonweal Foundation. Single copy, $1.50. Yearly subscriptions, U.S., $32; Canada, $34; foreign, $37. Special two-year rate: U.S., $57; Canada, $61; foreign, $67. All Canadian and foreign subscriptions must be paid in U.S. dollars by International Money Order or by check on a U.S. bank.

Illustrations: Cover design, Emil Antonucci; cover & pp. 230, 232, & 243, Paul Valerry; pp. 233 & 236, Jerry Bauer; p. 256, Hannah Jordan.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COMMONWEAL



CONTENTS

Volume CXVI, Number 8

Correspondence	226
Editorials	227
Audition for tragedy: *Joseph McNeal*	229
Sharpening the silence: *Chris Anderson*	230
God's true brew: *John Garvey*	231
Writing with intent: *Robert E. Hosmer, Jr.*	233
Poetry: *Charlotte F. Otten*	241
Hanging in the balance: *Linda Robinson*	242
Screen: *Tom O'Brien*	245

BOOKS

The Body and Society: *Wayne A. Meeks*	246
Losdt in the Land of Oz/ I am of Ireland: *Mary Pat Kelly*	247
Religious booknotes: *Lawrence S. Cunningham*	248

STAFF

Editor: Margaret O'Brien Steinfels
Associate Editors: David Toolan, Karen Sue Smith, Patrick Jordan
Production Editor: Anne Robertson
Senior Writer: Robert G. Hoyt
Poetry: Rosemary Deen
Movies: Tom O'Brien
Columnists: John Garvey, J. Bryan Hehir, Abigail McCarthy, David R. Carlin, Jr.
Staff: Harriette Balsky, Lissette Galindez, John A. Black
Advertising Manager: Ruth E. Taylor
Publisher: Edward S. Skillin

Commonweal, [ISSN 0010-3330] A Review of Public Affairs, Religion, Literature, and the Arts, is published every other Friday commencing the second week of January except the last week in December and monthly in July and August, by Commonweal Foundation, 15 Dutch St., New York, N.Y. 10038. Telephone: (212) 732-0800. Display advertising correspondence should be sent to Ruth E. Taylor, 11 Graffam Rd., So. Portland, Me. 04106 (207) 799-4387, classified advertising correspondence to 15 Dutch St. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Commonweal, 15 Dutch St. New York, N.Y. 10038.

The editors are always glad to consider any material for publication, but may we again remind readers that unsolicited manuscripts should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. We regret that we cannot otherwise return such material.

Crimping the accords

"We do not claim the right to order the politics of Nicaragua. That is for the Nicaraguan people to decide." President George Bush's statement last month announcing bipartisan agreement with Congress on Central American policy has the ring of a new start. Of course, Washington has never admitted that it ever claimed such a right, even in its headiest Rambo days, though it has consistently acted as if it did. Mr. Bush's unilateral decision to maintain 11,000 *contras* in Honduras as an independent fighting force through February 1990 echoes that unspoken claim. His plan may seem reasonable in light of longstanding U.S. policy interests, but it subtly contradicts the administration's high-sounding praise for the Esquipulas II accords. The settlement adopted by the five Central American presidents at Tesoro Beach, El Salvador in February, among other provisions, called for the closing of the *contra* bases in Honduras.

The bipartisan agreement with Congress makes it clear that the administration will continue to direct policy by its own lights, slightly more benign in packaging but substantively unchanged in perspective.

Perhaps we seem to be quibbling. After all, the agreement does break new policy ground. For the first time Washington, speaking with one voice, has endorsed Esquipulas II, at least rhetorically. By accepting the legitimacy of Nicaragua's right to self-determination, the administration appears to have repudiated the doctrine of using force to overthrow the Sandinistas. By drawing Congress into this policy, the administration has shown its desire to end another battle, the one on the Potomac, where mistrust and misuse have abounded for nearly a decade, reaching their nadir in the secret arms diversions of the Iran-*contra* affair. To have put such a period of waste and futility behind us would be an accomplishment of a high and useful order.

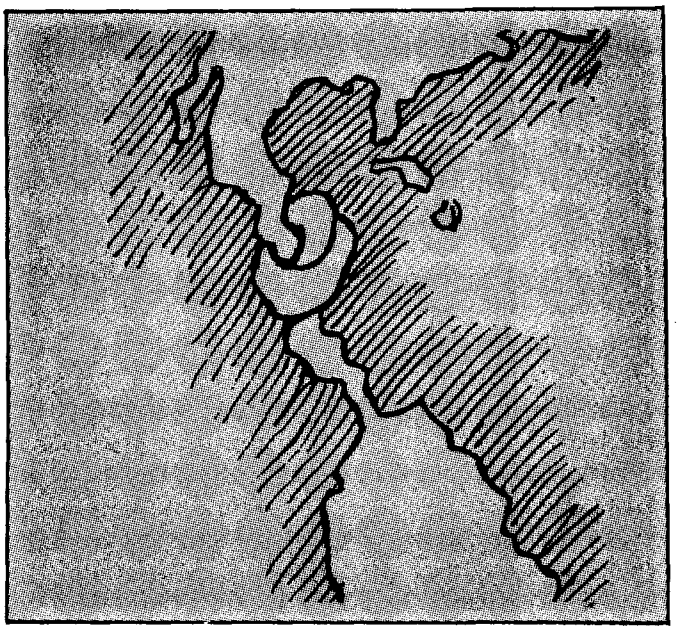
But old habits die hard. A carrot-and-stick policy is a positive advancement over the stick alone, but it carries no guarantee that U.S. policy will evolve into a genuinely collaborative relationship with the Central American republics. In fact, Washington appears more irked than edified by the growing regional solidarity in Central America, which initiates measures on its own without prior approval from the U.S. For those who consider the management of the hemisphere's affairs their divinely-ordained prerogative, such independence smacks of ingratitude. The manner in which the U.S. wrenched the arm of Honduras last month to keep the *contras* in place, despite the hardships their presence have caused and despite President José Azcona's agreement at Tesoro Beach to repatriate them within three months, shows Washington's disregard for the Central Americans' initiatives. Yet it is only those hard-won diplomatic initiatives that have finally produced some movement toward reconciliation and reconstruction in the region.

Washington's continued undermining of these initiatives of Central America's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

civilian leaders has an additional cost. It strengthens the military, further compromising long-term prospects for genuine democratic rule in the region, which, after all, is what the Reagan and Bush administrations have professed to be the goal of U.S. policy. Can anyone claim that democracy has been enhanced for the average Honduran by the overpowering intrusion of U.S. military money and supplies into that country over the last five years? Furthermore, the $4.5 million that will be spent each month to maintain the *contras* on Honduran soil (Costa Rica, Guatemala, and El Salvador could not be persuaded to take them) is money that could have been spent to repatriate them now, settling them in their own homes, and money that could have been used to encourage their participation in Nicaragua's national elections next February. Although President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica, the architect of the Central American peace initiatives, has acquiesced in the Bush plan, his senior aides have said that he preferred a policy of immediate resettlement. While the Bush administration has urged some *contra* political leaders to return home to take part in the elections, why does it delay full repatriation if it genuinely believes that the ballot is as powerful as the bullet?

The Nicaraguan government has shown considerable flexibility under the pressures of Esquipulas II. It recently freed the majority of its political prisoners, offered cooperation in international drug-interdiction efforts—specifically with the United States—and has gradually but steadily enlarged the scope of political freedoms in the country. Most recently, Nicaragua proposed twenty-nine reform amendments to its national electoral law in preparation for the upcoming February 25, 1990 election. The new amendments guarantee that political candidates will be able to share equal time on state-owned broadcasting facilities, that public financing will be granted to all the parties participating in the election, and that the use of government employees and property in conducting campaigns will be prohibited. The opposition is calling for a number of other changes to be made before April 25, the date when all the reforms of the electoral law have to be completed. Specifically, the opposition is against the government's insistence that members of the armed forces be allowed to run for office and that only those Nicaraguans who return in person will be allowed to vote. The Nicaraguan government, on the other hand, has led the call for UN-directed inspection teams to monitor compliance of the Esquipulas II and Tesoro Beach accords in the region, belying U.S. claims that the *contras* should not disband because there were no strict timetables to measure Nicaraguan compliance nor means for verification.



It would be a critical failure if members of Congress, as a result of their March agreement with the administration, were lulled into silence and let down their guard in resolutely monitoring Mr. Bush's ongoing actions in the region. Speaker of the House Jim Wright quickly announced that the agreement precludes any offensive military actions by the *contras*. This stipulation of the agreement must be kept under constant congressional and public scrutiny. The administration's promise to report regularly has a familiar leaden ring: previous promises and constraints have proved ineffective.

But finally, oversight will never be enough. What is needed in Washington is not a policy that, whatever its apparent novelty, maintains the crimped and self-absorbed policies of the past, but one that finally begins to respect the interests and cultures of the Central American countries, to welcome their regional solidarity and cooperation, and to see them as equal and independent partners in a larger endeavor at building democratic and prosperous societies.

REPORT FROM ROME

AUDITION FOR TRAGEDY

A ROAD PAVED WITH EXCUSES

The American archbishops left Rome pleased by their meeting with the pope and Vatican officials (March 8-11). In the words of Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk, vice-president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB), the meeting was a success because it was marked by "conviction, candor, and kindness." But back home many Americans, especially women and theologians, found the statements coming from Rome extremely disappointing.

The archbishops went to Rome ready to defend themselves to the Vatican while trying not to appear confrontational. Rather than disagreeing with Vatican policies, the archbishops argued that they are doing what the pope wants but that Rome is misinformed about the American church and does not fully understand the conditions presented to the church by American culture.

For example, the Americans forcefully defended their church tribunals from attack by Roman officials who believe annulments are granted using improper procedures. The archbish-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ops, many of whom worked in these tribunals at earlier stages in their lives, argued that American tribunals grant 80 percent of the entire church's annulments because the American bodies are well staffed and efficient, and because large numbers of American Catholics are seeking annulments. Although the number of annulments granted in the U.S. may appear disproportionate when compared to the number granted elsewhere, it appears more reasonable when measured against the much greater number sought, but never even accepted for consideration.

Yet beyond the question of effectively countering Vatican suspicions, the debate never confronted the fact that even with 36,000 annulments a year, the tribunals deal with only a small fraction of divorced and remarried Catholics in the U.S. The tribunals will never be an adequate pastoral response to these Catholics. While Roman and American prelates debate tribunal procedures, the vast majority of divorced Catholics either absent themselves from Holy Communion or participate in violation of church law.

Likewise, Archbishop Daniel Kucera of Dubuque reported that liturgical abuses and general absolution are rare in the U.S. despite what is said to Rome in letter-writing campaigns from so-called traditionalists. But only a few archbishops argued for more generous norms for general absolution, and they were put off with the ahistorical argument that "the church is not free to change the modality of the celebration of the sacrament." Nor did any archbishop call for even limited experimentation in the liturgy.

The Roman meeting was first proposed in 1986 by Bishop James Malone of Youngstown, Ohio, then NCCB president, who called attention to "a growing and dangerous disaffection of elements of the church in the United States from the Holy See." This is a new phenomenon in the American church that has traditionally been very loyal to the pope. Although the archbishops may think that the Rome meeting, along with the John Paul's 1987 visit to the U.S., has eased the tensions, many of their flock will not feel so reassured, and the meeting's well-publicized jabs at women, theologians, and American culture generally may only increase the alienation the encounter was meant to heal.

Many women, for example, were distressed by the totally unserious treatment of feminism by both American and Vatican prelates. No one questioned the reiterated condemnations of something known as "radical feminism," guilty of corrupting family values and destroying religious life. But no one insisted that the term be defined either. "Radical" feminists appear to reject all existing authority as patriarchal or insist that equality is totally incompatible with the recognition of any differences between the sexes, i.e., of any "complementarity." At a minimum, complementarity means "no" to the ordination of women. Cardinal Antonion Innocenti, prefect of the Congregation for Clergy, asserted that women asking to be ordained are seeking power and not service in the church. Cardinal Edouard Gagnon, prefect of the Council on Family, warned bishops to keep an eye on religious women in their tribunals so that "their tender hearts do not play tricks on them." Such statements not only do not relieve the tensions, they foster anticlericalism among women who already accuse the church of sexism.

Back in the United States, the archbishops quickly distanced themselves from these comments, but Cardinal Gagnon insisted after the Americans had returned home that his words were not sexist but merely accurate: "We have hundreds of cases of tribunals run by nuns," he said, "and they give declarations of nullity as soon as a woman cries in their presence." To have such an ignorant and insensitive man be the spokesman of the pope on the family can only increase the alienation of American Catholic women. This is also the man who condemned the sex education series, *New Creation* (with an imprimatur from Archbishop Kucera), for having dirty pictures.

Likewise, disaffection among theologians was heightened. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, attacked theologians for spreading dissonant views in the media. "Bishops," he criticized, "have little exercised their teaching authority in opposition to theologians." Cardinal John O'Connor of New York agreed that bishops have lost confidence "in their magisterial authority, perhaps in the face of some hard-hitting theologians, perhaps out of fear of the press."

Some American archbishops argued that the heavy-handed use of episcopal authority against theologians would be counterproductive, but none came to the defense of theologians in general. As one theologian commented, "If we spoke about bishops with the kind of contempt that they spoke about theologians, they would be outraged." In the minds of theolo-

AMERICA Magazine

presents

The John Courtney Murray Forum Lecture for 1989

THE CHURCH AND ITS PUBLIC LIFE

by Margaret O'Brien Steinfels

Introduction
George W. Hunt, S.J.
Editor in chief, AMERICA

Thursday, May 18, 1989, 5:30 p.m.
The James B. M. McNally Amphitheatre
Fordham University School of Law
140 W. 62nd Street at (9th) Columbus Avenue

To confirm attendance, call (212) 581-4640

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gians, the Rome meeting can only be the latest Vatican and episcopal vote of no-confidence in their scholarship. It follows the removal of Charles Curran from Catholic University, the announcement on March 1 of an oath and profession of faith to be taken, at least in principle, by all Catholic theology teachers in Catholic universities, and a proposed set of norms on Catholic higher education placing theology departments under the oversight of local bishops. When the Catholic Theological Society of America meets in St. Louis this June, it will likely join German, French, and Belgian theologians in protesting events in the church.

Finally, Cardinal William Baum, prefect of the Congregation for the Seminaries, told the archbishops to defend the celibate male priesthood and to get ready to expand their seminaries to receive more vocations. No one in the United States sees any empirical evidence for this expectation; bishops would be foolish to develop their long-range pastoral plans while ignoring the numerical decline and the aging of their clergy. The Canon Law Society of America is so concerned about the situation that it is preparing to call for the ordination of married men.

Altogether it was a curious meeting. The papers that opened each session had not been circulated ahead of time, which to most people would seem like a minimum way to prepare for what the pope declared a "historic" encounter. Perhaps as a consequence, almost all the presentations were mediocre. The curia officials said little, leaving the Americans to make their excuses. The big excuse was American culture, a veritable whipping boy, criticized all round for its secularism, hedonism, individualism, and moral relativism. While the benefits of religious freedom and democracy were acknowledged, the

Sharpening the silence

Last week I lost my voice. It was just laryngitis brought on by the combination of a cold and all the talking teaching requires. It didn't hurt when my voice started sounding gravelly and then rasping, and then disappeared altogether, so to begin with there was the pleasure of getting sympathy for appearing sick.

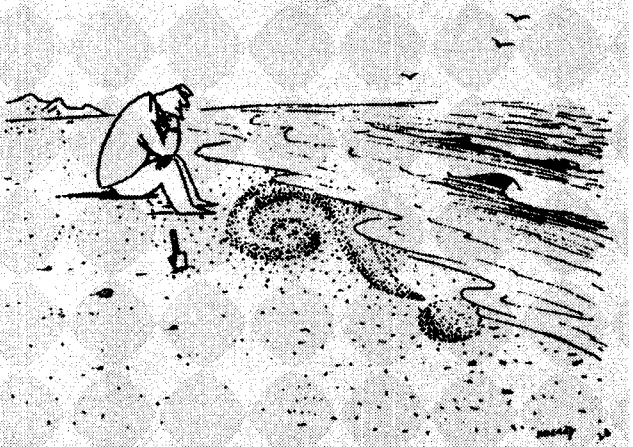
The main effect, though, was a strange alertness and focus, the way a blind person's other senses sharpen. There was a special quality of light in the early spring sun. The trees were budding. The daphne blooming by the front door gave off its soapy perfume.

Language is a kind of verification for me, a confirmation. In some instinctive way I don't believe I exist, so I keep up a constant stream of language as a way of making sure that I'm noticed and that I notice myself.

It's exhausting really, expending so much energy outwards, generating a haze of words to be seen through. Words make commitments. People hear you say something—or read something you've written—and then later when you've stopped caring about it or forgotten it, they want to talk and you have to disavow it or deal with it in some way. Words turn into little pests you have to put up with, little bits of uneasiness to live with.

Losing my voice was an excuse not to talk and a reason not to feel guilty about that. Suddenly with this attack of laryngitis all the lines of force balanced inside, establishing themselves in a pattern instead of going every which way—like the time a tree surgeon came to examine our sickly tulip poplar and told us not to be concerned because the tree was "thrifty," self-sustaining and in good shape. Laryngitis established that same kind of economy in me, at least for a while.

At meetings and in class people seemed to listen more closely to my whispered comments. There was an inverse proportion between the quantity of talk and the apparent value of the words. Other people felt freer to talk and to talk to each other in my presence, so that the ebb and flow of those particular occasions was especially satisfying. At the end of the day there wasn't the sense of raggedness and exhaustion that always follows a day of being verbally out of control. Something similar happened at home with the kids. I sat on the couch in my accustomed place and they came to me. They talked more. Late afternoon turned to evening and they were quietly playing around me, occasionally telling about



something that happened at school, and I would just smile or nod. The wise and knowing father.

My voice is coming back again and I'm worried. Somehow I want to continue to live that purer, better life. I've thought of faking it but I know that my impulses would give me away. The voices in my head are getting louder. The quiet is fading.

To whom can I talk about this distrust of words? How to explain this nostalgia for silence? CHRIS ANDERSON

CHRIS ANDERSON *is assistant professor of English and composition coordinator at Oregon State University.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

emphasis was on the dangers of excessive freedom and democracy in the church.

And for all the complaining, the meeting featured not a single systematic and comprehensive examination of American culture and society. In good and never paused to look calmly and with theological prin- reality it was supposedly addressing carefully at the ture certainly has plenty to answer for, it Though Ar to see European clerics exhibit so little what has made religious life, Catholic and non- is also much more vital in America than in their own nes. Instead, they seem unduly eager to rush from their own success at de-Christianizing much of Europe to telling the Americans how to evangel-

No American archbishops were so rude as to say that the problems were not just with American culture but with the Vatican's and, yes, the pope's outlook. Rome's solution to every problem is stricter enforcement of official church teaching and discipline by the bishops. But the use of church authority to suppress dissent is simply creating more dissent. The Vatican's conception of authority is undermining the church's credibility at a time when American culture desperately needs a credible voice for sexual morality, family values, self-sacrifice, and justice. The archbishops may be happy with their better relations with Rome. Those who are not themselves convinced of this papacy's wisdom apparently feel that the safest course is to make no waves but plead for understanding. Meanwhile, important sectors of the American church are becoming more alienated—and more disheartened. One day the hierarchy may wake up to realize that they have the ecclesiastical equivalent of an Alaskan oil spill on their hands, and there will be no regaining the opportunities they let slip by to prevent it. For many who love the church, today is a crisis and tomorrow may well be a tragedy. JOSEPH McNEAL

Joseph McNeal is the pseudonym of a longtime observer of the church scene.

OF SEVERAL [illegible] DREN
GOD'S [illegible] AN'T BE WATERED DOWN

John Garvey

ecent column (December 16, 88) I suggested that the differences between religions sometimes matter more than what they have in common. This brought in veral letters, a few to *Commonweal* and a few addressed to me personally. Taking issue with the late Joseph Campbell on matters of comparative religion is, apparently, a little like beating up Mother Teresa.

Ordinarily I wouldn't return to a subject brought up in a previous column without covering my tracks by allowing a few years' distance to intervene; that only the most compulsive reader from *Commonweal* would notice. But these here are very important, and some letters raised them well. They're a clarification, though I am not still make the objectors any happier.

First of all, suggesting that's matter is not a call for warfare religious traditions, nor does signing non-Christian religion darkness—or, like fundamentalists, considering them works of the devil. One danger is that in trying to reconcile the very different Buddhist and Christian approaches to (for example) the question of the reality of a subsistent ego, which Buddhism considers illusory, we run the terrible risk of making neither position as pointed or challenging to the other as it should be. A comparison can be made with the blandness of American civic religion: in an effort to be nonexclusive, American culture developed a kind of *Saturday Evening Post* cover religion and gave us the God of the ministers who invoked by politicians at legislative sessions. A fuzzy reverence for everything religious, with no sense that one approach to truth might finally be more compelling than another, is like a commitment to monogamy without being married to anyone in particular.

Here a critic could jump in: marriage does not imply that your wife or husband is the best or only possible wife or husband. True enough. And again: religious traditions other than Christianity tell profound truths. This is what, I believe, one letter writer (Ann Storz, *Commonweal*, March 10, 1989) found good about Joseph Campbell's comparison of religions to various software options, each trying in a limited way to get to the heart of the mystery of being. She further suggested that Campbell respected the power of commitment to one religion, quoting him as saying that "a chap like myself, who likes to play with the software—well, I can run around, but I probably will never have an experience comparable to that of a saint."

This statement is not untypical of Campbell, and it shows his debt to his mentor Jung. Before saying what it is that seems strikingly wrong to me in their positions, let me say that I once found this approach extremely attractive. At one point I could have subscribed without qualification to the belief that all religious systems aim in different ways at a point in infinity which none of them can articulate completely or adequately, and therefore all are worthy of equal veneration. I believe even now that the insights of Buddhism, for example, are genuine and profound, and that the Bhagavad Gita should be read by Western readers for religious as well as literary reasons. But there are sound reasons for a Christian rejection of Campbell's, and Jung's, approach.

One is the fact that they deal with all traditions as if they were stories, to be compared as one compares literary texts, searching out meanings that may not be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

apparent on the surface. For reasons of scholarship or simple literary delight there is nothing wrong with this. The similarities between Jesus and Baldr the beautiful, in Norse mythology, struck me first when I was about eight years old and read Padraic Colum's *The Children of Odin*, a wonderful retelling of the Norse myths. The comparison moved me then, and still does. Rather than weaken any Christian feeling I had, it strengthened that feeling. No problem, so far. It would be tone-deaf for Christians not to sense something resonant there, and it is plain thickheaded of fundamentalists to see only the demonic and the dark in what is so clearly beautiful and helpful.

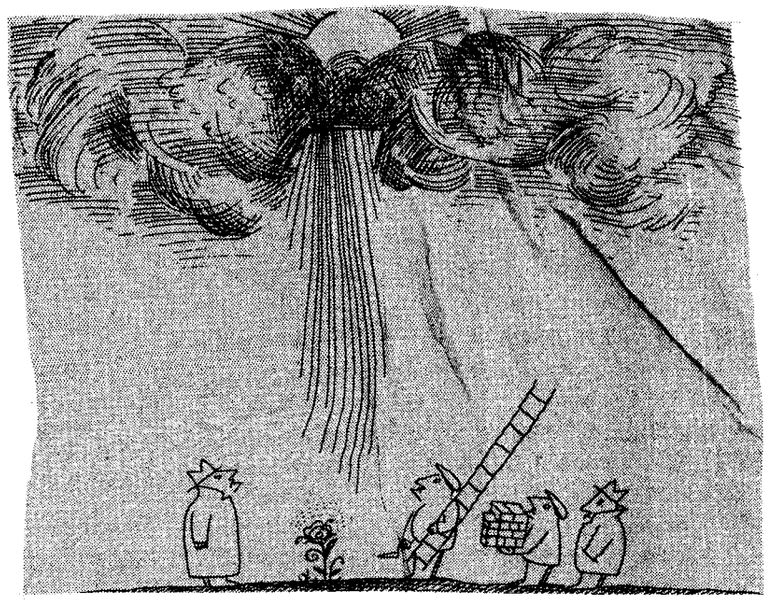
From an orthodox Christian point of view, however, there is something more here than a story. As interesting as the stories are, it is not enough to see how Jesus and Baldr are alike, or what Christian ritual has in common with Mithraic ritual, or what meanings can be found in the several myths of the dying king. Christianity says that this happened in history, that a particular person was in fact divine as well as human, that his suffering was not a story but something done to him at a particular moment, that he rose from the dead and revealed that death has been overcome. Buddhism has not claimed anything like this for the Buddha. It is not at all clear that Hindus would claim historicity for Krishna, and nothing in Hinduism depends upon it. In Christianity, however, everything really does depend upon the idea that this is not simply a story representing a human aspiration, but a revealing of God's movement towards us. It is certainly much harder to accept this than it is to see its literary appeal, but it is the difference between being a Christian and finding Christianity an interesting idea.

Once I would have thought that this is what makes those other religions seem so much more sophisticated than Christianity, which shares with Judaism something that strikes surrounding cultures as unreasonable; that is, its unwillingness to allow its God to be placed in a pantheon alongside all the other gods. This attitude would indeed be intolerant and terribly impolite if all the gods were equally true, or if they were all equally inadequate symbols. It has been the insistence of Jews and Christians that they are not. I believe a Christian can accept the relativistic view of a Campbell only by being insensitive to the claim that has been at the center of Christianity since its beginnings.

I know of a Greek woman who, as a girl, was imprisoned with other Greeks by the Nazis. When an order to kill a specific number of prisoners was given, she was chosen for death. On more than one occasion other prisoners, older women, asked the authorities to allow them to die in her place, so that this child might have a chance at life. She is alive because of something much more profound than a story. Stories have been written about such incidents, and they move us, as they should. But she is alive because she was, in fact, died for. Someone had enough compassion, someone was able to empty herself- else, to die th for the love of someone

Christianity i.. pened for all of us- The one who died rose fi that this hap- us that this risen life is what wh of us. called to share. It is not a story w w to understand, but a movement of G love towards us. The Nicene Creed says that Jesus "suffered under Pontius Pilate" to emphasize that his suffering happened a particular historical moment.

Where Christianity and the other relig- io revelation (Judaism and Islam) dif om the Eastern religious tradi- ions the belief that God has moved owar If all religion were simply the human which li for a profound meaning nothing sive, there would be metaphor. O with the software of the belie however, is full towards us, has moved This does represented in wrong; it mean that the One w seeks us, and has search love in a way we or That we can learn f undeniable, but the uniquely the incarna watered down or aba of politeness. To accept the Jung approach is to place the Christian claim the background, while finding the resemtance of the Christian story to other sto- rs the more important thing. The words oChrist's teaching and the events of his ity have grown dull for us because of rep familiarity, and any new ligh upon them is helpful. (I know a lo istian children have found their faith ed by an encounter with Aslan in C 's *Narnia Chronicles*.) The sim ions the great myths and religideo d are fascinating, but the proa the Jung/Campbell apChris backwards. For the here: omething coldhearted lovest for by someone who an interesting.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WRITING WITH INTENT

THE ARTISTRY OF MURIEL SPARK

ROBERT E. HOSMER, JR.

In Muriel Spark's fifth novel, *The Bachelors* (1960), Ronald Bridges, an epileptic graphologist, announces, "To me, being Catholic is part of my human existence. I don't feel one way as a human being and another as a Catholic." No clearer statement of Muriel Spark's sense of herself could be located; time and again she has declared, with force and enthusiasm, the strength of her religious convictions, and her assent to "absolute truth, in which I believe things which are difficult to believe, but I believe them because they are absolute." Yet just how is Muriel Spark a "Catholic writer"? Often grouped with Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh, she writes fiction that diverges from theirs more often than it coincides. Her novels are certainly not primers for spiritual edification nor are they handbooks of instruction. She is neither polemicist nor propagandist nor homilist.

This is a writer who has confronted the great questions of existence and come away, if not with answers, then with considerable illumination; a writer who has entered the arena of existential combat and come away with some significant victories; a writer who has paradoxically contracted the limits of her art and expanded the possibilities of her faith. Consistent concerns and patterns emerge with sufficient clarity and forceful regularity so that it is possible to distinguish her eighteen novels as vigorous inquiries into the nature and value of the good, the possibilities of belief, and the development of maturing religious consciousness. Simultaneously and necessarily, such exercise reveals dimensions of the Roman Catholic novelist's bravura artistry; for, in her, spirit and substance are indivisible. Such an exercise must begin with a discussion of Spark's background and conversion.

Born in 1918 in Edinburgh to a Jewish father and a Presbyterian mother, Muriel Sarah Camberg was educated privately. She did not attend university but rather chose to marry S.O. Spark in 1938 and take up residence in Rhodesia. After the dissolution of the marriage, Mrs. Spark returned to England with her son and served in the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office before becoming editor of the *Poetry Review* (1947-1949). During the postwar period she wrote and published a good deal of poetry and, though she won the Observer story contest in 1951 with her tale, "The Seraph and the Zambesi," she continued to think of herself as a poet. The 1950s were times of financial and emotional struggle for Spark. Hearing that she needed a patron, Graham Greene cabled: "I'd like to apply for the job. Please ring me." He gave her a monthly stipend of 20 pounds on condition that they not meet and she not pray for him. Greene's allowance continued for eighteen months, until the success of her first novel, *The Comforters* (1957), enabled her to write, "I'm, O.K. now. You can stop."

Spark's emotional difficulties were not so easily overcome, however. Though reared a Presbyterian, she has said that she "had no definite clear beliefs at all up to 1952"; in late 1953 she became an Anglican. Then she began to read Cardinal Newman; deeply moved by his thought and elegantly persuasive style,

ROBERT E. HOSMER, JR., *is Five-College Associate in the department of English at Mount Holyoke College, where he has taught courses in writing, Old English literature, and women writers.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Spark nonetheless could not follow Newman into the Roman church immediately: her aversion to Catholics held her back (as she told one interviewer, "Good God, I used to think, if I become Catholic, will I grow like them?"). Indeed, that aversion is often reflected in her fiction—in the attitude of Ronald Bridges in *The Bachelors* ("As a Catholic I loathe all other Catholics"), in the presentation of Catholic characters like Georgina Hogg in *The Comforters* ("a psychological thug," given to accosting others with the greeting, "You are full of sin!"), and in the portrait of Dottie, "the very pious, old-fashioned Catholic" in *Loitering with Intent* (1981) who enrolls others in "The Guild of Our Lady of Ransom" while filching their property.

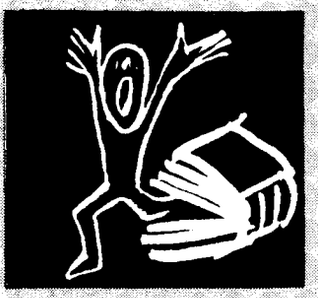
Yet Cardinal Newman finally prevailed, prompting a conversion Spark has described as "really an instinctive rather than an intellectual experience." Her conversion was not, she claims, the inevitable result of study and reflection; becoming a Catholic was not an intellectual decision but "a total feeling," for "belief is not intellectual; you believe something the way you say that's your mother, or that's your sister; it's a fact. It's something I recognized which *is*."

Spark's conversion did not cause her to become a novelist; rather, she explains, her conversion had "a very, very releasing effect" which "coincided" with her finding her "writing voice." Thus, because it is absolutely central to her life and art, Muriel Spark's conversion must be detailed with some precision, and while it is clearly impossible to document the disposition and movement of most souls with satisfying accuracy and amplitude, in this case the soul herself has provided a good deal of information, particularly in the record of an interview given in 1961 and later published as "My Conversion."

In the first place, Muriel Spark makes a sharp and necessary distinction between popular religion—("those terrible bleeding hearts, the saints, the pope, priests") and what she terms "the church as a repository of faith, which represents many of the truths we hold to be most important." The cornerstone doctrine of that repository is the Incarnation: the Son of God became man by the power of the Spirit; his death and resurrection have brought salvation for all humankind. In his embrace of matter, all human history was changed, indeed transformed, becoming a scheme of salvation history with a consequent reorganization of time. Out of evil, good can emerge.

This time-shattering event has certain consequences. In and of itself, it is a particular revelation, part of a scheme that began with creation, manifesting the participation of the divine within the context of these human constructs, "time" and "history": the supernatural is a participatory reality in the realm of the natural (an essential element of Spark's belief as well as her literary aesthetic).

Second, Christ's embrace of matter in his own person and in his earthly activity established a sacramental economy, a system whereby ordinary elements, transfigured by divine power, become not only signs but substance of another, transcendent reality. The "transfiguration of the commonplace" has operated in Spark's fiction from the beginning. In an article on Proust, written in 1953, Spark criticized "present-day Christian writing" for "a dualistic attitude toward matter and spirit... the tendency to equate matter with evil." Paradoxically, she discerned in Proust, whose "work is based on a pagan aesthetic,... a sacramental view of life which is nothing more than a balanced regard for matter and spirit."



Robert Hosmer's critical essay on Muriel Spark is another in our series of articles on contemporary Catholic writers of fiction. We have asked our essayists to give an overview of the author's works, showing our readers where and how this writer locates the central human drama, the big questions, the religious crisis of our time. What does the Catholic sensibility of a Muriel Spark have to tell us about our common world, about the state of our souls? Previous articles in the series include Rosemary Booth on Mary Gordon (August 12, 1988) and John B. Breslin, S.J., on Andre Dubus (December 2, 1988).

Third, human history, set within the context of a fallen world, is a battleground between the forces of good and evil for the control of souls; human existence is everywhere a struggle in which human beings do have the powers of choice and free will. Every one of Spark's novels is concerned, in one way or another, to document this struggle.

Fourth, on an even more personal level, Spark's conversion meant discovering in those absolute truths "a norm from which one can depart," direction ("it's a matter of when you're at sea you like to have a compass so you can go on from there"), as well as a sense of perspective and proportion ("in the broad historical sense the church does teach you to see things in proportion"). In addition, she has perceived "so many things in common and a kind of basic trust" between herself and her coreligionists that she now "would prefer to live with Catholics"; Newman's insistence on the absolute necessity that charity characterize our dealings with all has been taken to heart.

Fifth, conversion to Roman Catholicism was the watershed experience of Muriel Spark's life, simultaneously establishing her identity as a person and releasing her writing voice; in her conversion the spiritual and creative dimensions of existence were fused, but not without considerable cost. Marginal poverty, undernourishment, writer's block, and religious upheaval brought her to the edge of a breakdown; she later saw "this real emotional suffering" as "all part of the conversion." Though she found that she could write after her conversion because she "began to see life as a whole rather than as a series of disconnected happenings," the experience did not put an end to her

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Ballad of Peckham Rye presents a complementary reality: the diabolical in the world. But the greater sophistication of Spark's literary technique makes this a more difficult, indeed problematic, novel to consider. In some ways the novel stands in sharp contrast to its predecessors: there are no Catholics to speak of, unless one counts Nelly Mahone, a lapsed Catholic, and perhaps Dougal, who is never described as one, but does become a Franciscan novice for a period; there are no converts here; and the distinctly working-class ethos of this novel is a departure as well.

Though Dougal dreams he is the Devil, when asked if this is so, he answers, "No, oh, no, I'm only supposed to be one of the wicked spirits that wanders the world for the ruin of souls." Wander and ruin he does, breaking up relationships, wreaking havoc, and indirectly causing at least one murder. In the end, he slithers off, first to Africa, then to a monastery, before becoming a very successful novelist.

Dougal is not Satan, for he does not introduce evil into the town of Peckham; he merely activates that potential inherent in some of its citizens. Though he can, on occasion, work good, this "angel-devil" most often insinuates and manipulates toward evil ends. *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* expresses Spark's belief that the diabolical is on the loose in the world.

In the tradition of Shakespearean comedy, this novel closes with a marriage, one that had been delayed by Dougal's interference: his machinations have had only temporary effects. And Spark's narrative voice delivers a final line conveying the groom's vision of "the Rye for an instant looking like a cloud of green and gold, the people seeming to ride upon it, as you might say there was another world than this." It is the vision of that other world beyond, against which the chaos of quotidian experience is thrown, and against which it assumes proportion. The author's long view puts the novel's events in perspective, affirms the existence of transcendent power and goodness, and infuses with hope what might otherwise be a gloomy novel. It's all a matter of choice and perspective, and Spark invites the discerning reader to share her perspective, to consider the possibilities: angel or devil; belief or unbelief.

In *The Bachelors* the battle is even more pitched with Ronald Bridges, an epileptic Catholic, paired off against Patrick Seton, a spiritualist medium of uncanny powers. Bridges has a clear, if unusual, sense of his vocation. Unable to take holy orders because of his illness, he accepts his epilepsy as his vocation, using his fits as opportunities to cultivate greater self-awareness. These episodes let him know his strengths (analysis, definition, detachment) and his great weakness (a lack of charity). That knowledge challenges him to become more compassionate, to overcome his distaste for others, especially his coreligionists, and to become, unwittingly, an occasion of grace for others.

Seton's seances, on the other hand, are sideshows staged for the manipulation of the innocent, guilty, and gullible. While Ronald's fits bring true conversion, Patrick's seances provide him with motive, opportunity, and knowledge to set in motion diabolical schemes of murder, larceny, and blackmail. In short, they effect fraudulent conversion. *The Bachelors* is a stunning technical accomplishment, contrasting true and false belief created by the use of true and false centers of consciousness.

Muriel Spark's preoccupation with manipulation and the themes of good and evil, particularly with the presence of evil as a paradoxical moment of grace for conversion, finds full expression in her next two novels, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* and *The Girls of Slender Means* (1963). Concomitant advances in matters technical distinguish her fiction at this stage.

Jean Brodie is a developed treatment of the "angel-devil" figure of Dougal Douglas, a dangerous and deluded woman, evil yet somehow innocent, caught up in the struggle between the forces of good and evil warring for control of human souls. An extraordinary and unorthodox teacher at Edinburgh's Marcia Blaine School for Girls in the 1930s, Jean Brodie manipulates her students, using them to create a vicarious life for herself. A female woman, she lives in a self-centered world of adolescent vile fantic myth. This story of her lasting impact on her speci violens, "the Brodie set," brought Spark fame and considera wealth as the novel became a stage play and popular fi es

One particular girl, Sandy Stranger, is the perceiving consciousness of this novel. A convert to Roman Catholicism after she left school, Sandy became a cloistered nun, Sister Helena of the Transfiguration, who writes a best-selling treatise, "The Transfiguration of the Commonplace." As the reader follows her in the course of the novel, a pattern becomes clear: from Sandy's perspective, Miss Brodie is evil; she has "elected herself to grace"; "she thinks she is Providence...she thinks she is the God of Calvin, she sees the beginning and the end." The "creeping vision of evil" that Sandy discerns in Miss Brodie brings her to turn on her teacher, thwart her plans, and eventually to convert. Flashes of Sister Helena clutching the grille punctuate and close the novel, providing its most enigmatic

Muriel Spark in 1976

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

suffering. Her mind teemed with disorderly ideas, more frantic thought than she had ever experienced; though she had "never known such mental activity," and though it caused her to "suffer a lot," the "new gift" of Catholicism enabled her to establish a creative order. Thus, conversion, perception, and creativity are inextricably linked with suffering in the mind of this artist.

These truths are the central informing ideas of Muriel Spark's fiction. While she has never wavered in her essential convictions about the doctrines of her faith, she has had to struggle to accommodate spiritual vision and literary aesthetic. She has experimented with forms and strategies of fiction, seeking (and often finding) the means by which to express her very particular view of the world.

In the Beginning

In these novels, as in all she has written, the context is the fallen world, a battleground in the struggle between the forces of good and evil. Evil proliferates in [illegible] persons and outrageous acts (murder, mindless [illegible] girl[illegible]ce, forgery, fraud, blackmail); the natural and the [illegible]rnatural mingle in a chiaroscuro realm. Whether it is the voice heard by Caroline Rose, the Roman Catholic convert struggling to become a novelist in *The Comforters*, or the anonymous telephone caller, Death, terrorizing geriatrics in *Memento Mori*, or Dougal-Douglas, the diabolical dancer in *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*, or Jean Brodie, the archmanipulator with a hint of sulphur about her in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, the interplay between the natural and the supernatural establishes the dynamics of daily existence in these fictional worlds.

In these early novels it is a Roman Catholic, often a convert, who is the protagonist; David Lodge's description of Sandy Stranger in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* as the novel's "perceiving consciousness" is perhaps the best way to identify that character with whom Spark aligns herself.

In *The Comforters*, Caroline Rose struggles to integrate the demands of her newly-found Roman Catholic faith within the context of her own life as a fledgling novelist; at one point she considers that "the demands of the Christian religion are exorbitant, they are outrageous." In this novel of decided autobiographical import for Spark (in addition to her conversion and artistic calling, Caroline is part Jewish), Caroline achieves a personal integrity, rejecting the evils embodied in the self-righteous Georgina Hogg, the detached contemplation of Edwin Manders, and the misguided charity of Helena Manders as well as the diabolism, hedonism, and nihilism displayed by other characters. In the end Caroline, who accepts the reality of the supernatural voices writing her novel for her, overcomes her distaste for the foul Hogg; she learns to assume a more charitable role in a world of others, even where some are physically repulsive or morally repugnant. The outward conversion that took place before this novel began finds its necessary complement in this inward conversion, and *The Comforters* ends with Caroline's laughter echoing throughout a succinct parable of possibility. Though a lesser achievement in the canon of Spark's works (she has said she "wrote a novel to work out the technique first, to sort of make it all right with myself to write a novel at all"), *The Comforters* sets out her enduring concerns.

In *Robinson*, January Marlow, stranded on an island after an airplane crash, struggles first for physical survival, then for a kind of spiritual survival. A recent convert, she encounters the forces of lapsed belief, magic, superstition, primitive nihilism, and the occult. In the end she emerges as an integrated, functioning personality with a greater sense of charity, a sympathetic, if limited, artist.

Robinson was followed by the estimable *Memento Mori*, a novel in which a goup of English geriatrics, linked in various ways years previously but eventually separated, are brought into renewed contact by a series of puzzling telephone calls. Each receives the same message, "Remember, you must die." Nearly all the recipients attempt to find a "natural" explanation for the call, but several understand it quite otherwise: Charmian Colston and her former companion, Jean Taylor, both Roman Catholic converts, and Henry Mortimer, a retired police inspector and agnostic, all identify the caller as Death and accept the reality of the supernatural within the natural world. One of Spark's most overtly Catholic novels, *Memento* is really a meditation on the first of the four last things in the form of a medieval mystery play—Jean Taylor is the perceiving consciousness who, at a moment of grace, identifies the caller, though she has never received a call herself.

Neither Charmian nor Jean Taylor is a wholly admirable character, but, despite lapses and falls, each has chosen the good. Taylor's detached perspective is both physical (she is an elderly arthritic confined to a nursing home) and spiritual. In casting off pride and accepting the gruesome realities of pain and death she has opened herself to another reality: that infusion of grace which enables one to see aging as part of a fulfilling process that leads through death to eternal life. Her life of prayer, sacrament, meditation, and self-scrutiny constitutes a life well-lived, a death well-prepared for. Noteworthy here is Spark's portrayal of the agnostic Mortimer, who advocates a daily remembrance of the reality of Death, a nightly examination of the day's events from a moral perspective, something akin to the Catholic practice of examination of conscience: the workings of grace are indeed mysterious.

BOOKS IN THIS SECTION:

The Comforters, *Putnam, $6.95*
Robinson, *Avon, $6.95*
Memento Mori, *Putnam, $5.95*
The Bachelors, *Putnam, $6.95*
The Ballad of Peckham Rye, *Putnam, $5.95*
The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, *New American Library, $6.95*
The Girls of Slender Means, *Putnam, $5.95*
The Mandelbaum Gate, *Viking, $5.95*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

element: asked about influences on her during earlier years, she responds, "There was a Miss Jean Brodie in her prime." Why does the thought disturb her so? Perhaps because the battle for her soul, like that for all souls, continues in a fallen world? Perhaps because Sandy seeks the supreme confidence and self-defining authority Jean Brodie had, but cannot have since that authority belongs to God and the church? This is a novel from the pen of an assured and detached narrative artist who subverts traditional strategies, thereby drawing the reader away from the question of what happened, to why and how it happened.

In *The Girls of Slender Means* Nicholas Farringdon, in an epiphany atop a burning building, has a searing vision of evil sufficient to move him toward conversion. Nicholas, a fledgling poet in wartime London, makes the acquaintance of a number of young women living at the May of Teck Club, a residence "for the Pecuniary Convenience and Social Protection of Ladies of Slender Means below the Age of Thirty Years." At the age of thirty-three and rather undecided about a number of matters (sexual preference, religion, suicide, pacifism), he embarks on an affair with the lovely Selina Redwood. When a number of the girls are trapped on the club's third floor during a bombing raid, the only escape route lies through a narrow window leading to the roof. The slender Selina escapes, then returns, not to rescue someone else but to save a Schiaparelli dress she delights in wearing; at her reappearance with the dress, Nicholas "involuntarily signed himself with the cross." Only one girl, Joanna Childe, the virtuous, charitable daughter of an Anglican rector, gets caught half-way out and perishes as the building explodes.

Years later one of the girls remarks about a note found in the manuscript of Nicholas's poems to the effect that "a vision of evil may be as effective to conversion as a vision of good." Like Sandy Stranger, Nicholas Farringdon has received the gift of grace and been led not only to conversion but also to the professed religious life: he becomes a Jesuit missionary priest in Haiti, eventually dying a martyr's death.

Conversion is also central to Spark's next novel, *The Mandelbaum Gate* (1965), with Barbara Vaughan, the daughter of a Jewish mother and Protestant father, on pilgrimage in the Holy Land. In terms of explicitly religious content, this is probably the richest of Spark's novels; in terms of autobiographical detail, it is one of the most resonant.

Spark uses the motif of the pilgrimage in a medieval way, viewing the experience in both literal and figurative terms. Barbara Vaughan's quest to find an integrated identity is simultaneously a pilgrimage toward an earthly city located in the midst of a Middle East rent by strife and heated by the Eichmann trial (it is 1961), and toward a city which lies elsewhere. In the course of the novel Barbara achieves a sense of her own identity, forging an integrated self from the disparate materials of her background. In the end she is a seriously religious woman, at home in the world, living according to the spirit, not the letter, of the law. Here, too, the vision of evil is catalytic: Barbara spends one day at Eichmann's trial, observing that the former SS colonel was answering "for an imperative deity named Bureau IV-B-4, of whom he was the High Priest," and concluding, "it was a highly religious trial." Spurred by this and by an English priest's remarks on faith in a sermon that begins in clichés and ends with insight, this young woman "with the beautiful and dangerous gift of faith which, by definition of the Scriptures, is the sum of things hoped for and the evidence of things unseen," attains a mature religious vision, finally recognizing that "questions were things that sufficed in their still beauty, answering themselves," and that, "either the whole of life is unified under God or everything falls apart."

These first eight novels display remarkable similarities of content, but not strict uniformity. Each is carefully set within the context of a fallen world, precisely observed and documented: the good and the bad, the worthy and the unworthy, the beautiful and the repulsive, the angelic and the vile swim in the same stream. Yet that is no reason for despair, for the commonplace can be transfigured, grace is a reality, evil can be put at the service of good, and hope endures for those with faith. Not surprisingly, Mrs. Spark's literary artistry gains in facility and assurance; never exactly a novelist in the tradition of the great Victorians, she nonetheless fleshes out plot, character, and setting with wit and elegance; her noticeable departure, the fracture of a traditional chronology with flashes, forward and backward, sharpens the narrative focus elsewhere and replicates a divine timelessness, for what is time but a human way of attempting to order the chaos of experience?

Hope, Even at the End-Time

Muriel Spark's next four novels are not, as some have suggested, "secular" enterprises. Overt religious concerns may have all but disappeared and experimentation with form makes them more difficult exercises in meaning. Nonetheless, these novels which mirror contemporary experience and reflect the human situation in a world that has fallen into the absurd, are parables with all-but-hidden religious meanings. In the process of refining her artistry, Spark has offered stunning meditations on identity, predestination, time and eternity, and purgatory.

Interviewed in 1968 by Israel Shenker, Mrs. Spark named five living novelists whose work she reads—Murdoch, Mailer, Malamud, Bellow, and Robbe-Grillet—with a particular emphasis on the last. Robbe-Grillet's aesthetic can be summarized as an anti-realist, anti-romantic, anti-existentialist dogma grounded in the principle that literature is a search for an unknown, proceeding by means of rigorously objective description. Concern for traditional fictive elements like plot, character, and setting are nullified. Often taking his subject matter from newspapers, Robbe-Grillet describes personality and event with intense precision, from a very considerable distance. His is an antiseptically neutral position in moral terms; "the world is neither significant nor absurd; it simply is," he has

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stated. Spark's following four novels published between 1968 and 1973—*The Public Image, The Driver's Seat, Not to Disturb*, and *The Hothouse by the East River*—demonstrate a technical indebtedness to Robbe-Grillet. All seem to have mystified a good many readers and critics; Auberon Waugh's reaction to *Not to Disturb* is typical: "I have to admit that I could not make head or tail of her latest novel."

The Public Image reads like a fable. It is the story of Annabel Christopher, a very limited actress, who, under the tutelage of an Italian director, learns to play herself to a "t"; her press agent creates both public and private images, not only for the actress but for her husband as well. His staging of an embarrassing series of events and his own suicide, rather than ruining her, transforms her from a passive pawn victimized by image into a woman who spurns blackmail, takes her baby, and departs that "Motherland of Sensation," Italy, for a new life.

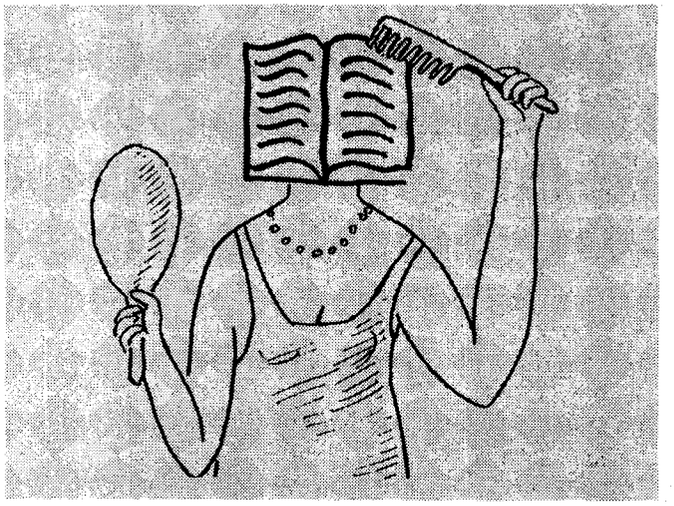
In *The Driver's Seat*, Lise, a quite unremarkable young woman, "neither good-looking nor bad-looking," avidly pursues her own murder at the hands of a sex maniac. She chooses carefully, everything from the clothes she wears to the place where she will be raped and bludgeoned so that what she has preordained will take place in the most grotesque, absurd, and violent terms. The novel chills the reader; Spark herself has said that she became frightened of Lise.

Not to Disturb is a grisly, gothic tale of horror with insanity, murder, madness, blackmail, pornophilia, and "sex [that] is one remove from spontaneous combustion." A staff of servants awaits the "predestined" murder of the Baron and Baroness Klopstock along with their lover, Victor, having previously arranged to sell the rights to the story to various media. Chaos comes again to this villa on the shore of Lake Leman and the first lines of the novel, taken from *The Duchess of Malfi*, have emblematic force and existential resonance throughout: "Their life, a general mist of error. Their death, a hideous storm of terror."

The Hothouse by the East River is a surreal tale told about Elsa, a woman whose shadow falls the wrong way, and her husband, Paul. When not out shopping or visiting with bizarre friends, Elsa sits and stares at the East River, smiling with an air of expectancy. The novel captures the frantic world of the Upper East Side of New York in the 1970s, a world where everyone's "into" analysis, disco parties, shopping at fashionable Madison Avenue boutiques, and avant-garde theater. Only three-quarters of the way through the novel does the reader learn that these

BOOKS IN THIS SECTION:

The Public Image, *Putnam, $6.95*
The Driver's Seat, *Putnam, $6.95*
Not to Disturb, *Penguin, $1.50*
The Hothouse by the East River, *Viking, $5.95*



suffering, confused souls died thirty years previous when their railway carriage was hit by a German bombing raid on England.

The influence of Robbe-Grillet's fiction on Spark's four novels is quite remarkable: each is a parody of *le nouveau roman*. At the same time each is a rather savage satire directed not only at particular aspects of the contemporary world—the image-making industry, tourism, television journalism, psychiatry—but also, and more importantly, at the moral nihilism and functional absurdity that pervade the contemporary ethos. In creating ghastly parodies of *nouveau roman*, Spark has co-opted a number of the techniques of Robbe-Grillet (what she has called "his obsession with exactitude;" his cinematic structural and narrative devices; his commitment to distance and detachment; his fondness for the present tense), while creating fictions which are deeply consistent with her longstanding, unremitting Catholic concerns. The perceiving consciousness of each of these novels blurs more than ever the distinction of past, present, and future so that all the novels are told according to Divine Saving Time, with death shaping the narrative focus to End Time. It is the End which gives meaning and coherence, not only in aesthetic terms, but also in theological terms.

Every one of these novels manifests hope: Annabel's departure with her baby at the end of *The Public Image*: choice and the truth have made her free; Lise's willful pursuit of her own end shreds the "doctrine" of predestination; the very last graceful line of *Not to Disturb*, "While outside the house the sunlight is laughing on the walls," posits a world other than pandemonium in the Villa; and Elsa's expectant smile as she gazes east, the iconographic direction of the Resurrection, is a sign that Purgatory by the East River is a liminal experience.

In these four novels, Spark has pushed to the near limits of the surreal so that questions and themes—not plot, character, or setting—reverberate painfully. The plot is so entangled that "it's a knot not meant to be untied." Absurdity has been exposed with obsessive exactitude to reveal the dynamics of the divine intelligence at work. For Spark the novelist has social responsibility: to describe the contemporary world with such precision—the good, the bad, the neutral—in order to disclose the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

radical insufficiency of a life, of any life, lived without genuine spiritual awareness. If in the process of that disclosure she is more subtle, even obscure, than before, it is not only because such obscurity may be a metaphor for the difficulty of discerning the true from the false in our world, but also because she, like Robbe-Grillet, invites the reader to participate in the process of creating meaning.

These novels constitute what Malcolm Bradbury has termed "a distinct aesthetic phase," but they represent more than mere aesthetic advance. They simultaneously exhibit a theological sophistication which can only be appreciated if Spark's readers will become what she clearly intends them to be: cooperating, perceiving consciousnesses capable of grasping significant theological insight by shucking the husks of quotidian experience and generating meanings for themselves. For her, though, subjectivity is not everything, unless subject merges into Subject.

The Eternal Now

In each of her last six novels Muriel Spark has reworked major ideas and concerns from her earlier work; this consistency is not repetition, however, but rather something akin to fugal variation on great themes.

The Abbess of Crewe is a satire on church politics loosely based on the Watergate episode of our own national history. To call it, as Ruth Whittaker has, "a timeless parable about power and corruption," is accurate but inadequate, for it is more. Spark's subtitle, "A Modern Morality Tale," gives a clear indication of her intent: *The Abbess of Crewe* is a pointed exemplum on perhaps the "deadliest" of the seven deadly sins: pride. Here among women ostensibly dedicated to the service of others, it generates a dangerous mythology of narcissism. Like Jean Brodie and Patrick Seton, Abbess Alexandra is a grand manipulator; like them she fosters a cult about herself. Unwilling to accept limitations and unable to locate herself within the dimension of sacred history, she declares, "we have entered the realm of mythology." Of course, her own narcissistic personality is central to the mythology she spins as she gathers her "set"; "You know," she tells them, "I am become an object of art, the end of which is to give pleasure." She mimics the divine, expecting that her word will order chaos and establish hierarchies. In her vile self-glorification and perversion of both the ends and means of professed religious life, she deserves Mrs. Hogg's scornful denunciation, "You are full of sin!" This is more than a morality tale: it is simultaneously a parable of the deceptions of art and the evils of faith grounded in self, not Other.

At novel's end, Alexandra sails for Rome, summoned to explain herself. The inattentive reader might conclude that the Abbess has had her willful way, not only with her sisters but also with her creator; at least one critic reads the novel's very last paragraph as an "endorsement" of the Abbess; actually, its echoes of Prosper's conclusion to the masque within "The Tempest" ("our revels now are ended") establish a contrast condemning this woman's perverted use of time and isolation from the world (Velma B. Richmond), while its beautifully wrought imagery crafted from traditional images of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the poetry of Thomas Traherne posit a world other than that consumed by grubby convent politics.

BOOKS IN THIS SECTION:

The Abbess of Crewe, *Putnam, $6.95*
The Takeover, *Viking, $8.95*
Territorial Rights, *Putnam, $6.95*
Loitering with Intent, *Putnam, $5.95*
The Only Problem, *Putnam, $7.95*
A Far Cry from Kensington, *Houghton Mifflin, $17.95*

A number of critics have seen Spark's next two novels, *The Takeover* and *Territorial Rights*, as exclusively secular concerns, an unoriginal charge no more valid here than when it was applied to earlier works.

Both *The Takeover* and *Territorial Rights* condemn false mythologies. At the center of the former is Hubert Malindaine, who claims direct descent from the goddess Diana and the Emperor Caligula; like the Abbess of Crewe, Malindaine has entered the realm of mythology, though he has not become an object of art exactly; rather, he has woven a complex mythological web from filaments of pagan syncretism, solipsism, gross materialism, and blackmail. At the novel's climax, a carefully choreographed cult observance in a garden at Nemi, presided over by Hubert as high priest, is disrupted by two women: Pauline Thin, a Roman Catholic, who arrests the congregation's attention by quoting Saint Paul, then reading the account of the silversmiths' riot at Ephesus from Acts; and Nancy Cowan, an Anglican, who joins in Pauline's condemnation of the cult of Diana and Hubert. *The Takeover* is a satire against materialism, church corruption, worldly Jesuits, the Children of God, Roman Catholic charismatics, and much more, but it would be a mistake to consider its possibilities exhausted by satire.

While *The Takeover* does indeed have two supporting characters who assert Christian norms in the midst of great license and corruption, and while all Spark's satiric arrows are shot from the bow of faith, another element of the text assumes an even greater role in the dynamics of the novel, reinforcing the author's perspective. As Velma B. Richmond has noted, the narrative of two servants' excursion to market contains an episode which begins thus: "They stood talking in the sunny main street of Nemi while life bustled by them...." The paragraph continues with a precise description of that life until this clause occurs: "while the whole of eternal life carried on regardless...." In turn, it is twice reinforced before the end of the paragraph: "eternal life untraceable and persistent" and "even the lizard...had never been startled by the shadow or motion of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that eternal life which remained, past all accounting, while Clara and Agatha chattered on...." The natural ease with which Spark has integrated the divine dimension within an otherwise unimportant narrative episode is more than a dexterous weaving of the natural and supernatural; in her hands it has become a metaphor for the ease with which it is possible to miss the eternal while being consumed by the materialism and monotony of the everyday.

Territorial Rights, set in Venice during the late 1970s, is a novel filled with evildoers: adulterers, liars, cheats, embezzlers, terrorists, blackmailers, drug dealers, and more. Things have fallen to below canal level in this novel: guilt is largely unknown, the wicked prosper deliciously; in the words of one character, "the really professional evildoers love it. They're as happy as larks in the sky." The one good character, a meek, mild, and scorned wife who stays home in Birmingham tending her goldfish and reading dull fiction, waiting for her philandering husband to return from Venice, receives her reward: a stolen bracelet and her wayward husband back again.

Demonic intelligence operates with startling efficacy in the absurd world of *Territorial Rights*, but the author, while detached and impersonal, has not failed to establish her customary perspective. She has aligned herself not with a particular character but with the great religious structures of Venice, monuments not of unaging intellect but of transcendent and enduring faith. As in so many of Spark's novels, the last paragraph is vital to creating meaning for the text; here the movement is clearly outward and beyond, to "mosaics [that] stood with the same patience that has gone into these formations, piece by small piece." This assertion of a different perspective from all those we have been party to in the novel, offers Spark's affirmation of a patient biblical integrity, even in the smallest matters, not just because such structures rise on foundations often crafted of small pieces but because the whole process, witnessed from another world, creates enduring monuments.

These two novels, rather longer than the previous five, represent a renewed narrative fluency and fullness for Spark, while continuing to call the reader into the fiction-making process. They are not games with obscure clues or meanings, but exercises in the operation of cognitive intelligence. They puzzle and perplex; let those with ears listen.

Spark's latest three novels—*Loitering with Intent*, *The Only Problem*, and *A Far Cry from Kensington*—form a unit: all concern themselves with the maturing of a religious person who is also a writer. Particularly in the first two, Mrs. Spark has returned to matters that have concerned her from the start: the vocation of the believing artist in the modern world and the problem of reconciling the existence of God with the persistence of human suffering.

In *Loitering with Intent*, Fleur Talbot recounts the story of her nine-month stint working for Sir Quentin Oliver, an evil and deluded snob who has gathered a "spiritual circle," called the Autobiographical Association, about him. A young woman of "abounding faith," who writes poems and occasional articles for church newspapers, Fleur finds that her experiences editing and typing the memoirs of the association's members sharpen her perception of evil, confirm her vocation as an artist, and strengthen her religious faith. Like Sandy Stranger, she discerns a creeping vision of evil in the person of the archmanipulator; unlike her, Fleur does not convert to Roman Catholicism—she is already a practicing Catholic—but rather converts inwardly to a more charitable attitude, opening herself by deliberate choice to receive unmerited grace, should it come her way.

Fleur Talbot matures as an artist and as a believer. Spark delineates the process as Fleur writes her first novel, offering asides on character, motives, overheard remarks, and the novelist's vocation ("Without a mythology, a novel is nothing. The true novelist, one who understands the work as a continuous poem, is a mythmaker"). That mythology takes its inspiration, substance, and direction from the novelist's "abounding faith." Excerpts from the autobiographies of Newman and Cellini are woven into the text of *Loitering with Intent* just as their very clear import is integrated within the personality of Fleur Talbot, who declares "how wonderful it feels to be a woman and an artist in the twentieth century." The novel's very last paragraph has her kicking a stray football "with a chance grace," landing it in a "small boy's waiting hands: the boy grinned. And so,

BECOME A 1989 ASSOCIATE

COMMONWEAL ASSOCIATES
15 Dutch Street, New York, N.Y. 10038

☐ Benefactors $1,000
☐ Supporters $500
☐ Patrons $250
☐ Charter $125
☐ Sustaining $50
☐ Full Amount enclosed.
☐ Half enclosed; remind me of the balance in 6 months.

(Memberships are tax-deductible)

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

having entered the fullness of my years, from there by the grace of God I go on my way rejoicing."

Having clarified the vocation of the artist with a very Christian focus, Spark turns to the problem of suffering. The dilemma of unmerited suffering, particularly in its classic biblical expression in the Book of Job, has preoccupied Spark for many years. Her first novel, *The Comforters*, was inspired by it, but failed to deal with the issue head-on. She tried, unsuccessfully, to write her novel of Job more than once. Though every novel Spark has written has dealt with suffering, and in a particular way when the novel captures the experience of conversion, none until *The Only Problem* has drawn in such a straightforward manner on Job.

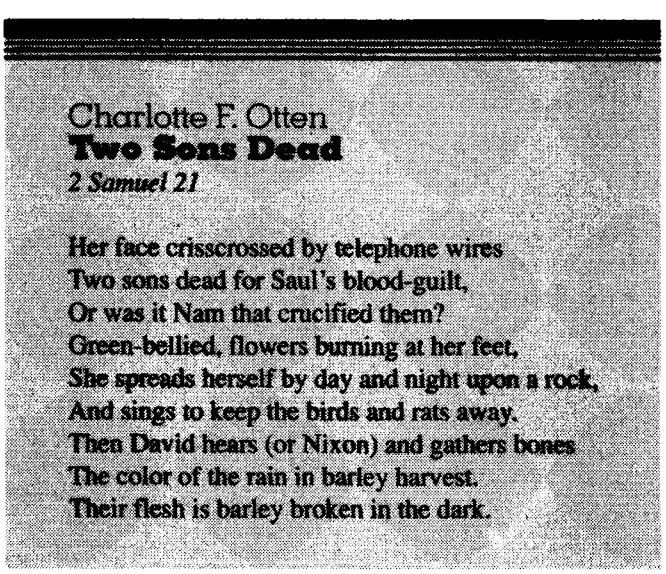
Harvey Gotham, a wealthy Canadian who has withdrawn to southern France to write a monograph on the Book of Job, is the novel's protagonist. A believer, perhaps even a Roman Catholic, Harvey seeks to reconcile the existence of a benevolent creator with the presence of unspeakable suffering. By novel's end, having suffered himself, he has ceased trying to find a rational solution; a man of "abounding faith," he has accepted the limitations of his creaturehood, acknowledged that suffering is a mystery, and learned that while suffering and art can illuminate Job (and life), that biblical text will never come clear because it is a poem, not a scholastic argument. Harvey's conversion is perhaps even more profound than a change in religious affiliation, for he has turned away from the intellect and toward the heart as a guide for conduct; chastened and more deeply spiritual, the perpetually interrogative Harvey, like Barbara Vaughan in *The Mandelbaum Gate*, has realized that "questions were things that sufficed in their still beauty, answering themselves." He now speaks in measured, declarative tones, turning outward at the end, into the world of social responsibility; unlike the Abbess Alexandra, Harvey has profited from the experience of withdrawal from the world, not so much from his own efforts as from an unexpected grace that touches suffering with insight.

In her most recent novel, *A Far Cry from Kensington*, Mrs. Spark has again written a fiction with decided autobiographical resonance. As in *Loitering with Intent*, a central Catholic character achieves status as a mature believer and artist. And as in the earlier novel, a pitched battle between the forces of good and evil (here the evil is radionics, a pseudoscience that uses a black box to affect people's lives, for good or ill) rages in post-World War II London. The conflict pits Nancy Hawkins, a young war widow in the publishing trade, against Hector Bartlett, a hack writer of extraordinary pretensions and execrable prose style. Here, as in other novels, evil effects a conversion, for Nancy's encounter with radionics causes her to re-examine her religious practices; though convinced that "it was a lot of rubbish," she reflects, "But was it any more mad than my compulsive Hail Marys at 12 o'clock noon?.... I decided then and there to give up those Hail Marys; my religion in fact went beyond those Hail Marys which had become a superstition to me." Like her creator, Nancy Hawkins accepts the absolute truths of doctrine, declaring, "I can't disbelieve."

In these eighteen novels, Muriel Spark has deepened and enriched the spiritual dimensions of her fiction. Whatever it may or may not reflect about Spark herself, there is a noticeable evolution of maturing religious consciousness in her central characters.

Simultaneously, the arc of her novels reveals Spark as a progressively more accomplished literary artist; a certain uneasiness with form, acknowledged by her with regard to *The Comforters* and *The Mandelbaum Gate*, has yielded in the last half dozen works to a sophisticated, assured stylistic fluency which integrates the religious content of the early first eight novels with the stylistic experimentation of the middle four. She has succeeded in solving what Frank Baldanza has called "the aesthetic problem of accommodating both the supernatural and the natural in her works." Her narrative strategies—the construction of a God-like, detached narrator, her departure from traditional chronology to emphasize the "eternal now," her fondness for parable, allegory, and the transfiguring power of the symbolic imagination, the triumphantly comic integrity of her fictional oeuvre—often dazzling feats in themselves, have been put at the service of a greater vision, what one character in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* perceives as "a sense of the hidden possibilities in all things."

Concurrently, Spark has developed a new relationship with her readers. As her protagonists have evolved toward greater maturity and her own artistry has done likewise, Spark's awareness of her readers has taken account of their evolving maturity as she has abandoned overt religious concerns and explicit statements in favor of more subtly integrated spiritual dimensions to her fiction. In her novels, presences have sometimes become generative absences, and the reader must assume greater responsibility for creating textual meanings. Yet this never happens without directed signs from the author, whom Frank Kermode has described as "an unremittingly Catholic novelist committed to immutable truths." Sustained by her own mythology, drawn from an abounding faith in those absolute truths in which she believes absolutely, Muriel Spark goes on her way, rejoicing. □


Charlotte F. Otten
Two Sons Dead
2 Samuel 21
Her face crisscrossed by telephone wires
Two sons dead for Saul's blood-guilt,
Or was it Nam that crucified them?
Green-bellied, flowers burning at her feet,
She spreads herself by day and night upon a rock,
And sings to keep the birds and rats away.
Then David hears (or Nixon) and gathers bones
The color of the rain in barley harvest.
Their flesh is barley broken in the dark.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HANGING IN THE BALANCE

EL SALVADOR'S FUTURE & THE LIMITS OF U.S. POWER

LINDA ROBINSON

El Salvador is replacing Nicaragua as the United States' primary Central American obsession. The nine-year-old civil war has intensified rather than abated since the Central American peace plan was signed in August 1987. In March 1988, the right-wing National Republican Alliance party (Arena), with alleged links to the Salvadoran death squads, won control of the country's legislative assembly. This signaled the discrediting of the Christian Democratic government led by José Napoleón Duarte, and foreshadowed the Christian Democrats' loss of the presidency to Arena in elections this past March. Although Duarte's administration was plagued by charges of corruption and economic mismanagement, he had been the centerpiece of the U.S.-supported democratization in that poor, embattled country.

Arena's victory was by most accounts a fair one, yet fears that the party will prove an extremist government have compounded concern over the lack of progress achieved after nine years and $3.6 billion in U.S. aid. Thus, the Salvadoran elections have galvanized the United States, with a new administration of its own, to reexamine its policy. Congress has already begun to raise the specter of an aid cutoff; it is now considering the FY 1990 foreign assistance request, which includes $386 million in economic and military aid for El Salvador.

Some believe that the Arena victory and the ongoing war clearly demonstrate the failure of former President Reagan's policy toward El Salvador. The severest critics, including many Democrats in Congress, believe that massive U.S. military aid merely bolsters the rightists and prolongs the war. They want to end the aid as a way of forcing the Salvadoran government to negotiate a settlement with the guerrillas. Other critics support continued aid but want it to be used more forcefully as leverage to bring about a negotiated peace soon, and to compel more reforms than have yet been achieved. Even many who support present U.S. policy believe its design and execution have not been perfect. Still, the question bears asking: just how much change can U.S. aid achieve?

The answer is somewhat more than has been achieved, yet the central reason for the continuing war has more to do with the nature of Salvadoran society than with U.S. policy failures. This fact is unpalatable to many in the U.S., where an abiding faith reigns in our ability to resolve all problems given sufficient will and money. The U.S. aid does provide leverage, but compelling change in a society with such massive, structural problems as El Salvador's is a monumental task. While a remarkable bipartisan consensus has endured for eight years in support of helping El Salvador's search for peace, there are indications that it is eroding amid fears of violence returning to the early 1980s' levels, on one hand, and overly optimistic hopes that a negotiated settlement can be reached on the other.

To understand what the realistic prospects for progress are, and what the United States can and cannot do, the *norteamericanos* must take off their rose-colored glasses and see what the country is actually like. Last year the Catholic church, which has played a major role in the so-far unsuccessful attempts at government-guerrilla dialogue, presided over a "national debate" whose objective was to seek out and define the public will. As part of this project, a nationwide poll was conducted in the summer of 1988 to determine Salvadoran sentiment across the socioeconomic spectrum.

Two responses stand out. First, 42.5 percent of the respondents, a plurality, said that negotiation is the best way to end the war. Second, when asked if the war would end in 1989, 43.9 percent replied that it would not. (Thirty-three percent, the second most common response to this question, held the fatalistic view that "only God knows".) The primary reason cited by Salvadorans for the failure of dialogue thus far was "ambition to power." So long as the combatants feel the war can be won by force of arms, these respondents implied, the conflict is likely to continue.

In January 1989, however, a surprising proposal was offered by the guerrilla Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). If the March 19 elections were postponed until September, the FMLN said it would participate in the elections, which it had five times previously rejected as meaningless, and respect the results. Although the proposal and subsequent conditions were ultimately rejected by the army, the political parties, and the government, and the March 19 election took place as scheduled, the FMLN offers were significant departures from the past. While some dismissed them as brilliant

LINDA ROBINSON *has written previously on Central America for* Commonweal. *She is associate editor of* Foreign Affairs.

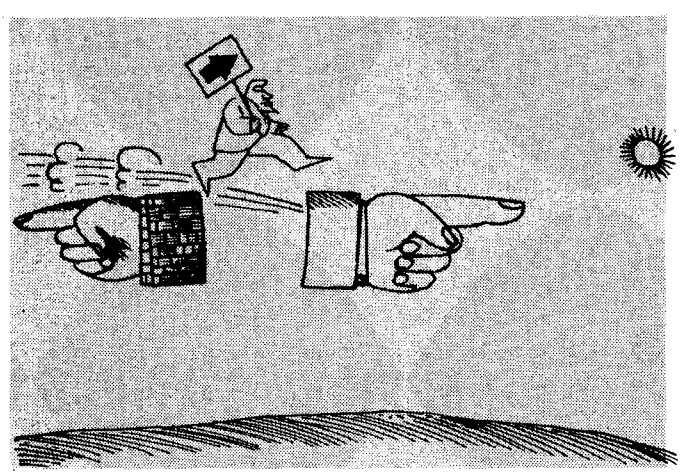
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tactical moves to throw the electoral process into chaos, the FMLN had nonetheless gone on record with their proposals and even offered to talk after the election. At the same time the FMLN invigorated the negotiating track by airing these proposals, however, it continued military actions, including bombing, economic and transport sabotage, and death threats against mayors and municipal councils. Hard-line guerrillas seem prepared to fight as long as necessary.

The rule in El Salvador, for both sides, has been fight and talk. That is not likely to change in the near term. The Salvadoran army's view, in which many U.S. officials concur, is that the guerrillas must be further weakened before a negotiated settlement is possible. This may be the hard truth, yet many are deeply skeptical that those who advocate an eventual negotiated settlement in fact mean it. Powerful elements in the military and Arena continue to seek a military victory. Some U.S. officials may be tacitly embracing this view, or at least not ruling it out. Finding victory elusive, the U.S. administration and the Salvadoran military seem prepared to fight an endless war.

Certainly, after nine years of war, the Salvadoran army appears no closer to victory. The substantial decline in the guerrillas' ranks has more to do with the limited improvement in the political climate than with the battlefield scorecard. The military also appears unable to prevent its members from committing human rights abuses (though these have declined from the levels of the early 1980s). The massacre of ten peasants in the jurisdiction of San Sebastian in September 1988 yielded forensic evidence strongly suggesting that soldiers were responsible. Defense Minister Eugenio Vides Casanova acknowledged on national television that the deaths were "a serious violation of the normal procedures established for the Army" and promised the armed forces' cooperation in the legal proceedings. If prosecuted, the case could lead to the first conviction of a Salvadoran officer. Though it is only one of numerous cases, many agree that a conviction could have a strong deterrent effect on future abuses.

In discussions of human rights, however, the reason behind increasing or declining abuses is often overlooked: when the army feels the guerrillas are making significant inroads, the military and paramilitary forces begin to get nervous and justify the abuses as necessary to contain the subversion. Such an upswing has been clearly visible in the past year, and promises to continue so long as the guerrillas are intensifying their actions. Since Arena won, it is in the FMLN's interest to provoke repression from the right, in the hope that U.S. aid will be cut off by Congress. The sad reality is that the right wing could well oblige the left, perpetuating the cycle of death. Despite the efforts of some U.S. officials and others, the Salvadoran right does not seem able to step back and see that the abuses ultimately alienate more Salvadorans than they dissuade from collaborating with the FMLN.



Another conundrum in the human rights issue is that the military is organized to encourage classes of officers to stick together. This camaraderie frustrates efforts to bring guilty officers to trial. While the current chief of the armed forces, Col. René Emilio Ponce, has advocated and executed a policy of "winning hearts and minds" of Salvadoran peasants, he is also a member of the "tandona," the military class of 1966 which harbors some of the most notorious violators of human rights.

Surprisingly, however, the Catholic church-sponsored poll cited above reveals that more respondents (22.5 percent) believed that the FMLN violated human rights than the army (10.8 percent). The second largest category (17.7 percent) held both sides equally responsible. The poll noted, however, that between one-fifth and one-third of the poorer sectors chose not to answer the question about who violates human rights more. Intimidation is still prevalent, practiced by both sides. Nonetheless, 38.4 percent of respondents believed that respect for human rights had improved in the last two years, while 27.8 percent said it was the same. A similar moderate proportion believed that freedom of expression, political opening, and popular participation had improved in the same period. Thus, although not a resounding endorsement of the political changes achieved in the recent past, a majority of Salvadorans clearly believe that the political climate is better or at least not worse.

Perhaps the most significant change in El Salvador, after the fact of a series of fairly clean elections, was the return of some of the guerrillas' civilian allies to participate in the political process. The leaders, Guillermo Ungo and Ruben Zamora, wear bulletproof vests and are labeled terrorists by the right and the army, but their efforts are expanding the political space in the country. If they succeed in rebuilding their base, this left-democratic alternative could be a crucial step in eventually ending the war.

Will Salvador descend further into violence under an Arena government? That is the $64,000 question, but there are few indications of an answer at present. While a recent article, "The Selling of Arena," in NACLA's *Report on the Americas* (March 1989) suggested that President-elect Alfredo Cristiani is a moderate façade for a murderous right-wing party, others believe that U.S. pressure and the power of the office that Cristiani inherits can hold the extremists in check. No one, not even Cristiani, pretends that Arena's founder and reputed death squad leader Roberto D'Aubuisson does not have a say in the party and thus influence

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

over the policies it will execute in office. A power struggle is certain, but the outcome is not. An interview I was conducting with Cristiani last fall at the party's campaign headquarters was interrupted repeatedly by D'Aubuisson, who obviously felt free to participate in the meeting even though he was not invited.

In their campaign, the Christian Democrats' (PDC) most common argument was that an Arena victory would lead to a deluge of violence. The resounding defeat of the PDC suggests that voters were less certain. Does Arena's victory presage the end of democracy for El Salvador? There is little evidence to support such a belief at this time: the majority of Salvadoran voters wanted to give Arena a chance, and the U.S. is bound to respect the election results. Cristiani has pledged to continue a dialogue with the guerrillas—suggesting that it could be resumed even before he takes office—and has committed himself to pursuing justice in human rights cases. These promises will be held up to intense scrutiny in the U.S.

While the deep hatred that has developed in Salvadoran society between various groups and ideologies makes U.S. aspirations to force a negotiated settlement seem unrealistic, limited progress has been achieved to date. It can be built upon, but not with the strong-arm tactics and rhetoric of some U.S. officials and congressmen. These have only fueled a growing anti-Americanism which is potentially quite counterproductive. It is possible that the U.S. could drive Arena and military extremists to opt for a Guatemala-style war of indiscriminate brutality, rejecting U.S. aid as Guatemala did in the 1970s.

Those who believe a cutoff in U.S. aid would force the military to reach a negotiated settlement do not consider the Guatemala case to be relevant. Yet the sad fact is that things in El Salvador could get much worse. More died in Guatemala's war, which its right claims to have won; because it was fought without U.S. aid, it received far less attention in the U.S. Arena may choose this path, and if so the U.S. obviously should not participate. But the Bush administration may be able to forestall this worse evil by making clear exactly what it expects of Arena if it wishes U.S. aid to continue.

For the past five years, Congress has required the administration to issue reports on progress that the Salvadoran government was making in efforts to reach a negotiated settlement, to end death squad activities, and to achieve other reforms. This is the minimum requirement that Congress is likely to impose again on FY 1990 aid. Liberal forces in Congress are seeking stronger conditions, and U.S. concern over Arena is strengthening their hand. Senators Mark Hatfield (R-Oreg.) and Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) have introduced a bill intended to encourage the Salvadoran government "(1) to achieve a peaceful settlement in accordance with the Esquipulas II accords of August 7, 1987, and (2) to reduce death squad activities and increase respect for the rule of law." The proposed bill provides an opportunity for Congress to halt the disbursement of at least half the military aid after March 31, 1990 if it concludes that the above objectives have not been adequately pursued.

Although a similar measure failed to pass the Senate Appropriations Committee last year, fears of Arena and a deteriorating situation in El Salvador in the next few months could muster the support needed for this bill to pass. The House is working on similar language with the expectation that this will facilitate these conditions' eventual incorporation into law. The timing will be important; if Arena has several months in office to demonstrate its intentions, the Congress will have some basis for judging whether this conditionality is required. And the actual decision to withhold aid will not be made until the new government has been in power for ten months. That is clearly ample time for concrete progress to be made.

The prospects are that strong restrictions on military aid will come out of the congressional committees. The possibilities range from giving Congress an opportunity to halt aid at a future date (such as the Hatfield-Harkin bill described above), requiring presidential certification of progress on the areas of concern (as opposed to nonbinding reports), reducing the amount of aid (the deficit-cutting legislation has pared foreign aid in recent years), or tying portions to progress on specific cases (small amounts have been sequestered previously, pending prosecutions for the murder of U.S. citizens).

Whether such measures are eventually incorporated into law or removed during the legislative process depends heavily on the position adopted by the administration and what happens in El Salvador. The recent executive-legislative agreement brokered by Secretary of State Jim Baker on the Nicaraguan *contra* issue has led many to hope for similar cooperation on El Salvador. If Congress is persuaded that the administration will not actively pursue the human rights and negotiations agenda with the Salvadoran government, it is likely to codify this agenda in legislation. The visit of Vice President Dan Quayle to El Salvador in February was an early hopeful sign of administration policy: he warned the military and the right that the Bush administration was going to scrutinize events carefully for any sign of backsliding on rights. Also, since his arrival last summer in San Salvador, Ambassador William Walker, a career Foreign Service Officer, has been sending a similar message of what the U.S. would expect from a conservative government there. Shortly after Walker's arrival the massacre of ten peasants occurred in San Sebastian. Walker warned Cristiani that this case would become an issue in the U.S. and urged him to come out immediately with a strong statement on investigating and prosecuting the case. Although the U.S. cannot force an end to the war, it can hold Cristiani to his pledge to seek justice in this and other human rights cases.

Most important to the aid debate is what happens in El Salvador in the coming months. If the violence begins to spin out of control, support in Congress for stronger restrictions on aid will grow. The majority has adopted a wait-and-see attitude, which could shift against aid very quickly. This sentiment is probably sufficient leverage to halt, or possibly even prevent, a drastic deterioration in the situation. Such a prognosis is small comfort to those who seek a radical change in El Salvador, but these are the apparent limits of U.S. power.

Defining concrete progress should be rooted in Salvadoran reality: the will to negotiate an end to the war does not now exist, but the conviction of officers for human rights abuses is not an unrealistic expectation. This would test the "demonstration

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

effect" theory that successful prosecution of one case could deter further abuses. On the other hand, it is simply wishful thinking to expect that Roberto D'Aubuisson will be eliminated from the power structure of Arena, much less brought to trial for his alleged role in the 1980 murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero. Although this view may seem to sacrifice justice to a less noble realism, it could yield continuing gains for a policy that has disappointed many because it promised more than it could deliver. If the Bush administration has one lesson to learn from the Reagan experience, it is not to call El Salvador a success story.

SCREEN

SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS

AVILDSEN'S 'LEAN ON ME'

Lean on Me is loud, simplistic, overly optimistic, and dramatically repetitive, but it is also valuable and inspiring. The story is based on the real life of Joe Clark, the controversial Paterson, New Jersey, school principal. Given Clark's continued presence in the headlines, and his odd choices in school policy, the film poses some unusual problems: it makes Clark a hero while pointing to aspects of his character that trouble even those who support his goals and understand the harshness of his methods. Art and life can't easily be separated in such a case. The film's faults are forgivable if you find Clark forgivable, which, on balance, I still do.

Morgan Freeman (last seen in *Street Smart*) as Clark dominates the film, almost brazenly. Too much footage consists of Freeman's shouting at, or sharing a shouting match with, unruly students or rebellious teachers who object to his methods of crisis control. Clark's character is rendered uninflected, with little internal conflict or doubt; his main enemies are a caricature mayor (Alan North) and a cardboard villainess (Lynne Thigpen), as a parent angry over her thuggish son's expulsion from school. It takes an assistant principal (Beverly Todd) to make Clark listen, just once, to the ways in which his reforms affect teachers. Little is shown of classroom methods, the nuts and bolts that made *Stand and Deliver* so strong.

Still, *Lean on Me* was not made for film critics; it was made to reach the kind of adolescents Joe Clark was able to reclaim for society. Consequently, the soundtrack includes some musical numbers loud enough to wake up even an "education president." Such aesthetic sins are slight compared to the good the film may do for its intended audience. Despite its defects—even despite the defects of the personality at its center—the film dramatizes the need to nurture hope in inner-city schools.

As the film shows, Joe Clark had a tough battle. He was called into a war zone, filled with drugs, fifth- and sixth-year non-graduates, near rioting in the cafeterias, assaults on teachers and students in the hallways—the kind of behavior still routinely accepted in too many urban schools. Under vigorous direction by John Avildsen (who directed the similarly simplistic but rousing *Rocky*), Freeman plays Clark as a drill sergeant; martial music accompanies his patrols down the hall. In some tough speeches to his teaching staff, he declares: "This is no g—d—mn democracy. We are in a state of emergency, and my word is law." Some critics claim the real Joe Clark enjoyed his power too much. Perhaps. But the movie stays on the surface and doesn't delve into complications. In the context depicted—despite some believable exaggeration—Clark's extreme management style is understandable. At least it gives more than lip service to the idea that our national security is at stake in our schools.

What makes Freeman's portrayal of Joe Clark attractive is his caring for students, his use of martinet-style for moral ends. Indeed, his best scenes are in a quiet mode, as he handles sensitive student issues in one-on-one sessions with some bright young performers. Freeman's toughest speeches are addressed to fellow older blacks, who, he feels, have failed to protect the innocence of children or tolerated less than the best from the rest of the school. He's had enough, he says: for too long, "we've been crucified by a process that is turning our black children into a permanent underclass."

The process, for Clark, is ruled by too many left-wing clichés. In his best speech, he points out the falseness of opposing order and freedom. "Discipline," he says, "is not the enemy of enthusiasm." Ah, a good word for discipline! One wishes, indeed, for more of this in Michael Shiffer's screenplay—more digging at the hidden ideological component in our educational malaise. Our schools suffer from many ills, and the film notes that the widespread poverty tolerated by capitalism is the ground for their frequent failure. But accessories to the crime include that portion of sixties ideology that said spare the book, coddle the child. Is there a worse way of not preparing children for later life, or for aiding and abetting the yahoo streak in American culture?

Until last year's *Stand and Deliver*, movies have furthered this streak. It is bad enough that teachers have been displaced by the media, but worse that their image has been so distorted: in *Fame*, *Breakfast Club*, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, *Porky's High School*, *Summer School*, *Making the Grade*, and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. Similar caricatures are found in sci-fi films: *War Games*, *E.T.*, and *D.A.R.Y.L.*. Even *Teachers*, ostensibly a defense of the profession, was filled with negative images; and college teachers are always depicted as alcoholics (*Reuben, Reuben* and *Educating Rita*) or casanovas (*Terms of Endearment*, *Moonstruck*). The whole culture has bid a dismissive "Goodbye, Mr. Chips." In such a context, it's easy to bid "Hello, Mr. Clark."

Lean on Me notes real issues in the education crisis; it addresses several others within reach: failure of will, poor pedagogy, lack of discipline. And, of course, too few characters like—at least the fictional—Joe Clark.

TOM O'BRIEN

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When celibates were a brash new elite

THE BODY AND SOCIETY
Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity
Peter Brown
Columbia University Press, $45, 504 pp.

Wayne A. Meeks

Peter Brown, I think, would agree with something that the late Yale religious historian E.R. Goodenough once told his students. In Victorian society, as Freud discovered, food could be a cryptogram for sex. In antiquity, Goodenough said, sex was more often a symbol for food. Sex can in fact symbolize many things, in antiquity as now for us post-Victorians. Madison Avenue's manipulators of consumption understand that fact—simplistically, but perhaps better than church historians, whose craft was brought to its zenith by the Victorians. This book is about the communicative potential of sex and of sexual renunciation in that era during which the rise of Christianity to social and political dominance accompanied, and in part caused, a profound transformation of the ways people in the West thought about the body and, through the body, the self and society.

Both the power and the variability of sexuality as "a privileged ideogram" catch Brown's probing eye. Some ascetic Christians "believed that the universe itself had shattered with the rising of Christ from the grave. By renouncing all sexual activity the human body could join in Christ's victory.... With marriage at an end, the huge fabric of organized society would crumble like a sandcastle, touched by the 'ocean-flood of the Messiah.'" For Origen, on the other hand, virginity was "a physical concretization, through the untouched body, of the pre-existing purity of the soul."

Brown is a disciplined but imaginative exegete, never blinded by the surface meanings of texts. For example, where other scholars have searched the bizarre tales in the Apocryphal Acts for evidence of actual women's roles, perhaps recorded by female authors, Brown sees instead "the manner in which Christian males of that period partook in the deeply ingrained tendency of all men in the ancient world, to use women 'to think with.'" He is sensitive also to the often-forgotten fact that meanings change with contexts. "In the Gospels we meet, not the world of Jesus, but the very different, more tense world of his disciples." Paul's world is utterly different from Jesus', and it was Paul's fate in turn to be misread—on no topic more drastically than his views on sex—by each of the succeeding generations for whom his letters were authoritative scripture. His supercharged notion of "the flesh" became "a Rohrschach test" for future expositors.

What Brown for many years has found fascinating about the rise of Christianity is the odd interpenetrations and changes of front that occur when a novel ideology engages the inertial forces of a complex, living society. It is very hard to distinguish between those things that, the more they change, the more remain the same, and the things that, even wearing familiar clothes, are at root different. Some observers, mostly modern Christian apologists, insist that Christianity brought to the world of the late Roman empire a unique and revolutionary ethos. Others, mostly Roman historians, see the Christian developments only as symptoms, not causes of evolutionary changes that were already happening in late-antique society. Brown sees both. Fissures opened up not only between the church and "the world," but between Christian and Christian; the fault lines had been there all along and needed only the shaking of radical images to gape open.

One of the things at stake in the battle of symbols was power. While the radical wing of the church, like the chorus of saints in the Apocalypse, sang Hallelujahs over their vision of a vanishing Roman order, urban leaders understood that the household had been the basic cell of the church and that the household both needed and undergirded a smoothly functioning social life in the cities. Who would govern: the old elites, incorporated directly into the church as patrons, as householders, as bishops (or new men imitating them in those roles); or the new elite, pursuing a *carrière ouverte aux talents*, ascetics and confessors? Though the ideology of the latter was often egalitarian, democratization is not exactly the right word for what they were trying to accomplish. They were really a brash new elite seeking to supplant the old. Women could, in some cases, belong to the new.

In two pivotal chapters, Brown treats the slow dampening, in the fourth and fifth centuries, of the tumultuous oppositions between town and desert, ordinary Christian and ascetic, into a gentle oscillation between two symbiotic worlds, "a tacit compact" in which the monks became mediators between a world that was not expected soon to end and the realm of God and the angels. The monks now began to play the role often assigned to the anomalous in a settled society: channels and brokers of the sacred. Though in different forms, the symbiosis of householders and monks took place both in East and West.

This is not a book to be read quickly. The journey Brown would take us on, to the land of people long dead and more different from ourselves than we have been taught to think, is a difficult one. One

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of his favorite phrases is "bruise the modern sensibility," as in "The sheer physicality of such stories [about the dangers of temptation from women in Egyptian monasticism] bruises the modern sensibility." It is a bruising journey, but Peter Brown is an extraordinarily reliable guide. He falters a little, I think, in his description of the Gnostics—the Gospel of Thomas becomes a star witness for Valentinianism, for example, which can hardly be right—and his reading of the heroes and heroines of the Apocryphal Acts as "a condensed image of the individual," standing against all the social forces of the age, may import too much of modernity, along with Northrop Frye's interpretation of the romance. These are very small quibbles, however, about a very large book. Brown never yields to the temptation to exhibit the strangeness of hermits, virgins, and pillar saints as a sideshow of the mind, and he almost never romanticizes them. Brown's extraordinary accomplishment is that he enables us to enter a little way into the world of these ghosts from the past, to think along with their logic, disturbing as it is to "modern sensibility." If the ghosts speak, as he says, "perhaps more gently than we had thought they might," that is in no small measure due to Brown's own special graciousness as much as to his uncommon eloquence. □

MYTHS OF DOMINATION

LOST IN THE LAND OF OZ
The Search for Identity and Community in American Life
Madonna Kolbenschlag
Harper & Row, $16.95, 204 pp.

I AM OF IRELAND
Women of the North Speak Out
Elizabeth Shannon
Little, Brown, $17.95, 264 pp.

Mary Pat Kelly

Both Madonna Kolbenschlag and Elizabeth Shannon begin their books in Northern Ireland. Shannon remains there listening to the voices of the women of the North. Kolbenschlag takes the story of the ancient Irish heroine Macha as a point of departure in "the search for identity and community in American life." Each tells the story of women imprisoned by bankrupt myths and failed metaphors.

Kolbenschlag, author of *Kiss Sleeping Beauty Goodbye*, contends that the myth of individualism embodied in the hero stories that have been used as "models of human existence for centuries" are "proving inadequate." The story of Macha, who gives birth prematurely to twins after her husband's boasting forces her into a race, provides "a glimpse of the root cause of our wounded world." These include "the abuse of the maternity of creation and of the deepest caregiving, nurturing instincts in ourselves." In order to heal ourselves and our wounded world, we must look beyond the myth of the hero and consider "the archetype of the orphan."

Kolbenschlag uses L. Frank Baum's *Oz* stories to elaborate her theme. Her close and inventive readings of those much-loved, turn-of-the-century stories resonate with the women who take myth workshops; Dorothy and Baum's other characters become organizing symbols for a work that draws on insights from a wide range of sources. This may seem risky. But the very accessibility of the stories helps in assimilating insights from psychology, Native American history, contemporary literature, movies, theology, and sociology. I was struck by the determination of Kolbenschlag, and the women with whom she works, to wrest wisdom from whatever source as they struggle to remake their lives. Women suffer to a disproportionate degree from myths that glorify domination and violence. *Lost in the Land of Oz* suggests that an urgent openness is needed in the search for new understanding.

Nowhere is the need to find nurturing, life-affirming myths more acute than in Northern Ireland. Here in the words of Elizabeth Shannon, men "sanctify war." Shannon's previous book, *Up in the Park*, covered her time in the Republic of Ireland where her late husband, William Shannon, served as Jimmy Carter's ambassador. Now she turns to the women of the North.

For her, the ultimate feminist goal in the North would be "to create unity among the women there and a common voice that rejects terrorism as a way of life." This voice must counter the men who "recite...ancient wounds with monotonous regularity." Shannon reaches this conclusion after many hours of listening to a diverse cross section of women, some Catholic, some Protestant. Some are politically involved, others are doggedly apolitical. Some hold extreme views that justify violence; most abhor the violence. Some claim to be feminists, others don't even like the word. As these women speak we begin to get a picture of a complex people caught in a dangerously oversimplified conflict. This is not a clichéd Northern Ireland where images of bombs exploding and tanks prowling burned-out streets explain everything. We see devastation but also the courage and good humor of women determined to survive. We meet them in the ranks of those who remain committed to nonviolence in the face of personal suffering. Anita Currie, Berna McIver, and Brid Rogers of the Social Democratic and Labor Party are from the Catholic nationalist community. We go into the homes of Protestant unionist women like Lucy Faulkner who wish to move beyond their tribe's dogmas. We also listen with Shannon to women who are putting their lives together after prison terms. Anne and Eileen Gillespie who claim they were unjustly imprisoned as IRA terrorists in England tell their story. We also hear the views of women like

(Continued on page 252)

REVIEWERS

WAYNE A. MEEKS *is Woolsey Professor of Biblical Studies at Yale University.*

MARY PAT KELLY *is a filmmaker currently writing a book about Martin Scorsese.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Catholic America

Lawrence S. Cunningham

To celebrate the bicentennial of the appointment of John Carroll as the first bishop in the United States (1789), the American bishops commissioned a multivolume history of the church in this country (*Makers of the Catholic Community: Historical Studies of the Catholic People in America, 1789–1989*, $160 per set). Under the general editorship of Christopher J. Kauffman, a team of scholars worked in thematic areas to approach American church history in a new and fresh way. The general editor promises a further volume on colonial church history to coincide with the quincentennial celebration of Christopher Columbus's first landing in the New World.

By "public" Catholicism, David O'Brien means that consciousness with which American Catholics experienced the wider communities of city, state, and nation. In short, O'Brien's book is a study

Public Catholicism, *by David J. O'Brien. Macmillan, $24.95, 304 pp.*

of the relationship of religion and culture with "Catholic" and "American" being the specific terms of that paradigm. Broadly speaking, he sees three types of responses to the issue of Catholicism and American culture. The first he styles as "republican" for its willingness to embrace the culture and even find religious significance in it. This response produced the "Americanist" bishops of the last century who have their descendants today. By contrast, the "immigrant" response looked inward to church needs and church imperatives while viewing the larger culture with suspicion and/or contempt. A third position, small in number but powerful in impact, O'Brien calls "evangelical" Catholicism; its more articulate vehicle of expression has been the Catholic Worker movement.

This would all be rather tame stuff except for the fact that O'Brien has a thesis that is baldly stated in the introduction to the volume and which runs as a leitmotif through the work: "after two centuries of organized existence in the United States, the American church has not evolved a coherent understanding of its public role and responsibilities."

Those who follow contemporary trends in the American church cannot but read O'Brien's volume with that argument in mind. Nineteenth-century defenders of orthodoxy denounced clerics to Roman authorities for their lack of Roman zeal as often (and frequently in the same language) as their contemporary counterparts. The Bishops Program of 1919 was excoriated as socialist meddling by the business community with the same fervor as those who howled when the pastoral on the economy appeared in the 1980s. O'Brien neatly points out the unresolved tension by recalling the Democratic Convention of 1968: a powerful Catholic politician (Richard Daley) sent out the police against demonstrators who were, in part, energized by another Catholic politician, Eugene McCarthy. What has changed now, of course, is that the three factors that had given shape to the American church were, by the 1960s, in disarray. The Tridentine character of Catholicism had eroded; the immigrant nature of American Catholicism was shifting to new Hispanic arrivals; and the easy optimism of the postwar period was shaken by the convulsions of the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War, and shifting global arrangements.

And the future? O'Brien does not believe that any of the three models—republican, immigrant, or evangelical—will win the day. In a somewhat cautious final paragraph, he sees a blend of conservative ecclesial policy and social progressivism as most in communion with the past; but whether that will be the model for the next millennium is as much a question for O'Brien as it is for most of us. Nonetheless, the conspicuous merit of this fine volume is to get us thinking about the issue in some coherent fashion.

Joseph Chinnici's book on American spirituality is not a full history but, in the words of the author, a "series of case studies" on the various historical manifestations of Catholic piety in the United States. Chinnici notes, in his introduction, that women are slighted, some conspicuous figures are missing, and the role of the religious orders is neglected. These are large omissions, indeed. I would add one other that is particularly regrettable, given the demographics of contemporary Catholicism: the absence of any systematic

Living Stones: The History and Structure of Catholic Spiritual Life in the United States, *by Joseph P. Chinnici, O.F.M., Macmillan, $29.95, 256 pp.*

reflection on Hispanic spirituality, especially the spirituality of the Southwest.

What Chinnici does treat, he treats very well by using broad categories of interpretation. He lucidly shows how piety intersects with different ecclesiologies and diverse Christological elements. His book serves as an antiphonal voice to the other volumes (e.g., that of O'Brien) because the spiritual outlook of people, almost of necessity, determines how they will regard the more general culture and the character of ecclesiology. One sees that vividly in the tension between the rather tolerant worldview of John Carroll and the more rigid view of those who had to cope with the immigrant church of the nineteenth century, a tension noted at the

LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM *is a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame. His books include* The Catholic Experience *and* The Catholic Faith: An Introduction, *both from Paulist Press.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

time by Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

Some of Chinnici's best pages spell out the rise of eucharistic devotion, the retreat movement, Marian devotion, and the first stirrings of the liturgical movement as these impulses gave shape to both church order and development of Catholic Action. One cannot help but be struck by the contrast between the nineteenth-century "Immigrant" and "Americanist" vision that derived from their competing spiritualities. It is almost as if one were comparing the editorial pages of the *Wanderer* and the *National Catholic Reporter* today.

In the final part of the book, four figures (Virgil Michel, Dorothy Day, James Keller, and Thomas Merton) are the emblematic figures chosen to characterize the reform impulses alive in the church between 1930-1965. They represent the mixture of personalism, attention to biblical and patristic sources, liturgical possibilities, social activism, and public engagement that would characterize postconciliar Catholicism. What all of them had in common, even though their suggested solutions were different, was a desire for a synthesis that would overcome the fractures in the experience of being both American and Catholic. They all desired a democratic spirituality open to all, a dissolution of barriers that separated religious or cleric from lay person, and an authentic concern for the vast sea of humanity that exists outside the church.

Chinnici's topic is a vast one. It is easy for readers to cavil at his omissions or quarrel with his focus (he is text-oriented and nearly silent on the arts, *belles lettres*, and music) but he has most decidedly provided us with a model and method for this kind of study. As James Keller would say, he has lighted a candle instead of cursing the darkness.

Gerald Fogarty's introduction to the volume on episcopal leadership is worth the price of the volume he has edited. It is comprehensive (almost alone among the many pages in these books he treats Eastern Rite Catholics), balanced, and in full command of the sources. His contributors are also well prepared to write on their

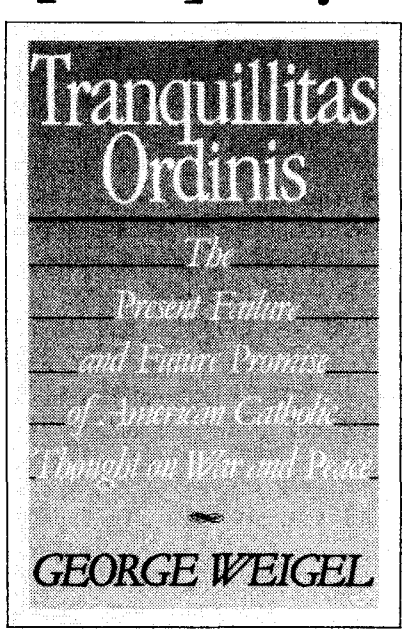
Patterns of Episcopal Leadership, *edited by Gerald P. Fogarty, S.J., Macmillan, $29.95, 308 pp.*

topics; we have James Hennessy on John Carroll; Clyde Crews on Joseph Flagert; John Tracy Ellis on James Gibbons; Marvin O'Connell on John Ireland, etc.

I read the single portraits, not in historical order, but ad libitum, alternating my personal villains (e.g. William O'Connell) with exemplars (Paul Hallinan). This is permissible to do once one has the

"[This] may be the book of the decade."

—Michael Novak, *American Enterprise Institute*


Tranquillitas Ordinis
The Present Failure and Future Promise of American Catholic Thought on War and Peace
GEORGE WEIGEL

"Arguably the best work on war and peace to come out of the post-Vatican II era."
—William McGurn, *The Wall Street Journal*

"A big, passionate, polemical, serious book about Roman Catholic thought in the United States....Weigel has written a lively, major work which is a significant contribution to the Catholic debate on war and peace." —Robert Gilliam, *The Catholic Worker*

"Thoroughly researched, cogently reasoned, lucidly organized, and temperately expressed, this book may change the state of the question." —Avery Dulles, S.J., *Crisis*

"Contributes significantly to the religious and moral arguments over peace, security, and freedom." —John Cardinal O'Connor

"An intellectual and religious event....Comprehensive, provocative and persuasive...it will undoubtedly be the subject of discussion for years to come."
—Richard John Neuhaus

512 pp. paper $10.95

At better bookstores or directly from
OXFORD PAPERBACKS

Oxford University Press • 200 Madison Avenue • New York, NY 10016

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

basic history straight (Fogarty gives us that at the beginning) so that one can enjoy that most wonderful form of reading: the good browse.

Of all the volumes in this series, however, this one also has a particularly contemporary appeal: it gives perspective on the contemporary scene. Catholics who despair of recent episcopal appointments based on narrow tests of orthodoxy and broad requirements of *Romanita* will be consoled to know that there is a long history behind this sort of procedure. Similarly, contemporary discussions of the relationship between papal oversight and episcopal jurisdiction mirror similar problems in the nineteenth-century church. Finally, there is the *basso continuo* of power: Who will have it? Who will share in it? Through what vehicles and/or channels will it be organized? In short, Fogarty's volume should be required reading for anyone who wishes to understand the contemporary turmoil and divisions in church governance. With some exceptions we learn that the bishops are not good guys or bad guys. They are, in fact, like us, human beings with their moments of greatness and mediocrity who must constantly grapple with their inherited culture and the rich demands of their Catholic faith.

Karen Kennelly's volume on Catholic women consists of seven long essays that deal with women in religious life, the ideology of domesticity, women in the labor force, the fight for equality, and reformers and activists. Those broad surveys are framed by an introductory essay on the ideals of American Catholic womanhood and closing reflections on Catholic feminism.

It has been said that women's history is, first of all, an act of recuperate naming, i.e., calling up those whom the historical tradition has forgotten. There is a great deal of naming in this volume, some of it very interesting indeed. Capsule biographies of women who, after fighting great odds, made their way into the professions or extended the ministries of the church or fought for social reforms or political equality flesh out the good start that scholars like Jay Dolan and Mary Jo Weaver have made in creating space for American women in church history.

American Catholic Women: A Historical Exploration, *edited by Karen Kennelly, C.S.J.* Macmillan, $24.95, 256 pp.

If I find fault with this volume, it is not with what it says but what it leaves out: why, for example, should a tendentious figure like Mary Daly get three pages of attention when a world-class writer like Flannery O'Connor is not even mentioned, much less commented upon? Similarly, Geraldine Ferraro, an archetypal Catholic daughter of immigrants turned professional and feminist, does not figure in this work at all. Again, there is a vast list of American women who turned their backs on the church (e.g. Margaret Sanger, Mary McCarthy) in quite public ways whose protestations would have shed much light on the tensions between the institutional church and women's needs.

This book, in short, is too short. It oscillates between interesting analysis of motifs and litanies of names with conspicuous omissions noted everywhere. That being said, we must also praise it, along with Mary Jo Weaver's *New Catholic Women* (Harper & Row, 1986) as a pioneering attempt to describe the powerful, yet insufficiently recognized, presence of women in the American church.

Immigrants and Their Church, *by Dolores Liptak, R.S.M.* Macmillan, $24.95, 222 pp.

Each of the volumes reviewed above deals with the immigrant church in one fashion or another. A few facts will explain why. In 1850 there were roughly one-and-a-half million American Catholics; a decade later there were over three million. In 1830 the American church had a dozen dioceses; by 1860 another sixty-five had been created. John Neumann (1811-1860) left off his ministry to the Indians to work with immigrants, work that required him to evangelize in eight different languages, including Gaelic and two Slavic tongues.

Dolores Liptak's book makes it quite clear that these immigrant groups were not of a piece. The close identification of culture, language, and religion among the Poles shaped Polish Catholicism in a manner quite different from that, say, of the Irish or Germans. The urban organization of the church had to take into account ethnic differences in a way that was not always apparent to the Irish who emerged, for a number of reasons, as predominant in the church hierarchy. The issue of how American the church was to be was not only an issue of liberal versus conservative; it was also in the last century, an issue

BE A SUCCESSFUL WRITER

Make money writing & earn while you learn

The British-American School of Writing shows you how to write articles, short stories, novels, romances, children's stories, radio and TV scripts. Professional writers give you *individual instruction* on how to write what's fresh, readable—and saleable!

You get *personal advice* on where and how to sell your material, and if you do not sell enough material to cover your tuition, we'll refund your tuition fees.

Write or phone today for our **FREE** book that tells you all about **"Writing for Pleasure and Profit"**. No obligation. No salesman will call.

Mail Coupon or Call Toll Free 1(800) 541-6002 /24 hrs.

The British-American School of Writing,

Dept.AS17, P.O. Box 425, Ansonia Station, New York, N.Y. 10023-0425

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

A DIVISION OF LEISURE STUDY GROUP

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of how to hold onto an inherited culture and a different language. Finally, there was the issue of bigotry and prejudice both from the Nativists outside the church and from within the church as well. It is a very delicate matter, one prelate wrote in 1899, how to tell the pope "how utterly faithless the specimens of his country coming here really are." The epitome of bigotry was reflected in the church's attitude toward black Americans. Despite a few shining moments and fewer concerned church people, the story of American black Catholics is sad. Liptak's chapter on the black experience is a painful one to read.

Liptak has a final chapter on the "post-immigrant" church but, as she makes clear, "postimmigrant" only describes a historical pause. The new immigrants (think of the Catholic composition of New York, Los Angeles, Miami, and South Texas) bring with them new challenges and problems that may bring the immigrant church once again to the fore.

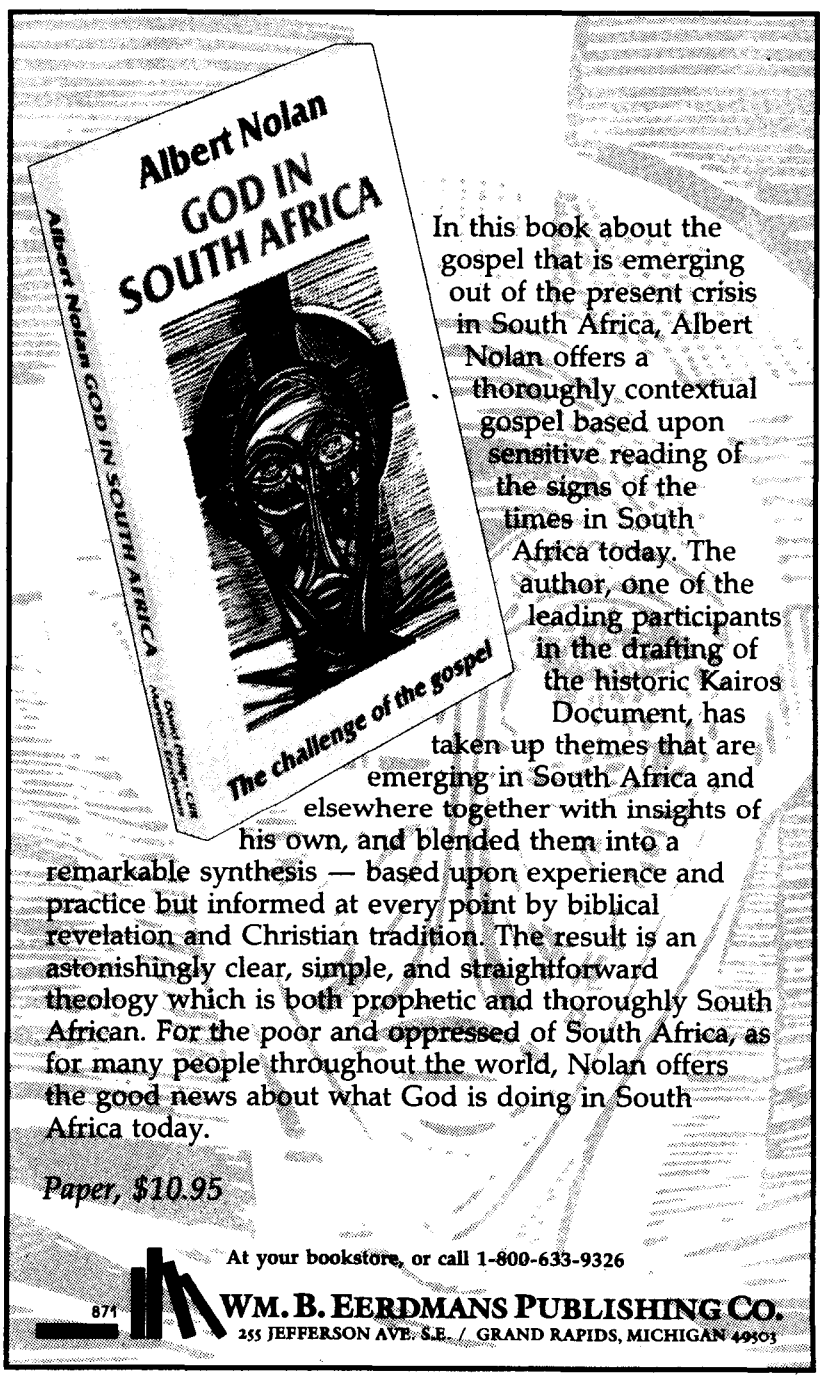
Margaret Mary Reher's book is the briefest of the six and this is a shame because it is well done and one longs for more. Her six chapters are "case studies" that treat the Enlightenment's impact on early episcopal leadership; the Romanticism of Orestes Brownson and the young Isaac Hecker; Hecker's "Americanism"; the issue of The Catholic University of America; Modernism and Catholic social thought; and a final chapter on an emerging pluralism from 1920 to the end of Vatican II. Within those six chapters are sharp vignettes treating everything from

Catholic Intellectual Life in America, *by Margaret Mary Reher, Macmillan, $22.50, 183 pp.*

American discussions of evolution and the emergence of *The Catholic Encyclopedia* to the impact of German romantic theology and the suppression of the *New York Review* in the antimodernist reaction of the early twentieth century.

To John Tracy Ellis's famous 1955 query about the causes of the paucity of Catholic intellectuals, Reher has answers that could not have been articulated then: the heavy hand of Rome; the unwillingness of the hierarchy to support a strong intellectual life (the issue of Catholic University's place in this is an old and continuing one); the rigid clericalism of American Catholicism; and the unresolved tensions in ecclesiology.

Reher's final chapter is a very compressed but highly informative survey of those stirrings which would form the seedground for the reforms of Vatican II. Everything from the liturgical movement and a revitalized Thomism to the rise of Fulton Sheen as a public figure finds its place in these pages. Everyone will lament particular omissions. I, for example, was delighted to see mention of Justus George Lawler's journal *Continuum* and a good discussion of its value, but sad that Reher did not treat *Cross Currents* which,


Albert Nolan
GOD IN SOUTH AFRICA
The challenge of the gospel
In this book about the gospel that is emerging out of the present crisis in South Africa, Albert Nolan offers a thoroughly contextual gospel based upon sensitive reading of the signs of the times in South Africa today. The author, one of the leading participants in the drafting of the historic Kairos Document, has taken up themes that are emerging in South Africa and elsewhere together with insights of his own, and blended them into a remarkable synthesis — based upon experience and practice but informed at every point by biblical revelation and Christian tradition. The result is an astonishingly clear, simple, and straightforward theology which is both prophetic and thoroughly South African. For the poor and oppressed of South Africa, as for many people throughout the world, Nolan offers the good news about what God is doing in South Africa today.
Paper, $10.95
At your bookstore, or call 1-800-633-9326
871
WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49503

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CUA

SCHOOL OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Celebrating 100 Years of Scholarship
Join This Tradition in a Second Century

THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

Systematic Theology
John T. Ford, John Galvin, Patrick Granfield, Elizabeth Johnson, Gregory Malanowski, Carl Peter, Peter Phan

Sacramental and Liturgical Theology
Gerard Austin, Kevin Irwin, David N. Power

Scripture
Christopher Begg, Frank Matera

Moral Theology
Thomas C. Kane, William May, John Tuohey

Patristics
Robert Eno, Robin Darling

Spirituality
James Wiseman

Pastoral Studies
Richard DeLillio, Charles Gravenstine, Douglas Morrison, Mires Stine

Degree Programs offered in the Department of Theology include the S.T.B., S.T.L., S.T.D.; M.A., Ph.D.; M.Div., and D.Min.

Programs are enriched by cross-registration with the Departments of Biblical Studies, Canon Law, Church History, Religion and Religious Education, and with the Washington Theological Consortium.

Scholarships Available

For Further Information Please Write:
Office of the Dean
School of Religious Studies
The Catholic University of America
Washington, D.C. 20064
(202) 635-5683

in its over thirty years of existence, has been a valuable conduit of European thought to American audiences. Likewise, we miss mention of the one area where American Catholics have gained true eminence: biblical studies. We shall have to wait for Gerald Fogarty's promised monograph on that topic for a full history of the subject.

Christopher Kauffman oversaw the entire series but his book on the Sulpicians was not part of it. His lengthy work details the labors of the Society of Saint Sulpice in their nearly two-hundred-year history educating priests in their seminaries. It is an exemplary study.

Tradition and Transformation in Catholic Culture: The Priests of Saint Sulpice in the United States from 1791 to the Present, *by Christopher J. Kauffman, Macmillan, $29.95, 366 pp.*

In 1941, the late Archbishop John J. Mitty spoke at the sesquicentennial of the opening of St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore by noting that the Sulpicians are "unknown to the faithful at large; they are known only to their students and their bishops." Those words are equally true today but this monograph should go far in remedying their obscurity.

The Sulpicians have not only rendered yeoman service to the church for nearly two hundred years but they have contributed much to the public life of the church (one of their members was a cofounder of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor) and, in the last century, along with the Paulists, were the most distinguished intellectuals in the American church. Their connections with the American bishops, the clergy (there are 12,000 Sulpician alumni in the U.S. today), and their often disputatious relationship with The Catholic University of America is recounted in detail by Kauffman. This closely argued monograph fleshes out what is often only mentioned in other volumes. It is a fitting tribute to a band of priests who will celebrate their own American bicentennial in 1991.

In one of my recent book notes, I cited with approval the observation of an author who said that bad history makes for bad theology. The converse is equally true. I read these books as a theologian, not as a historian. They are most instructive both because they provide perspective on the current ecclesial and theological scene (indeed, one gets a sense of déjà vu while reading them) and because they demonstrate clearly the intricate relationship between theological reflection and the practical life and polity of the church. That the American bishops should lend their support to this project, so ably launched, is one of the more hope-filled signs of the times. Church problems, like the poor, are always with us and both require our devoted attention. □

(Continued from page 247)

Dodie McGuiness who belongs to Sinn Fein, the political arm of the Provisional IRA, and serves on the Derry City Council. As Shannon listened to these women, she concluded that even among those who support the "Provos," there are gradations of opinion. Mothers of prisoners, for example, sometimes seem trapped into their political beliefs while the women "on active duty" have no doubts at all. The militant unionist women feared not only the violence of the IRA, but anything that seemed to make a united Ireland possible. Catholicism itself was obscurely to blame. The sophisticated wife of Peter Robinson, Ian Paisley's chief deputy, refers often to "Rome" and its involvement.

Shannon shares her appreciation for the essential beauty of both the land and its people and a concomitant frustration with the "addiction for revenge" that destroys and chokes off potential.

Sadly, of all the women who speak out in the book, the one who captured the attention of the world did it not through the life she lived but by the violent way she died and the horror that attended her burial. One year after she spoke to Shannon, Maired Farrell was shot dead in the streets of Gibraltar by an antiterrorist unit of the British Army while she was on an

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IRA mission. It was during her graveside service that a loyalist extremist armed with grenades killed three mourners and injured 100 more. The footage of this incident and the attack on two British soldiers by the mourners at the next funeral played over and over on TV. Somehow those violent images seen and reseen become unreal and the people in them, distant and different from us.

The women who speak in Shannon's book are very real and very close. Will attention be paid to them? □

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 226)

And he apparently abhors reliance on the magisterium. Instead he calls for reliance on the magisterium balanced by three other sources of authority (and confusion for the faithful): (1) Scripture (as if it did not come to us from the magisterium, its consistently correct interpreter); (2) Human experience ("I'll match mine against yours any day"); and (3) Sensus fidelium ("My sensus is as good as yours"). Whatever happened to the Jesuits' insistence on defining one's terms?

With teachers like these, no wonder the church is in trouble.

JOSEPH D. CRUMLISH

Claims & tactics

Stanford, Calif.

To the Editors: John Coleman's article on "papal fundamentalism" lends credence to the charge that it's an invention of progressives/liberals to justify their own disagreements with the Vatican while discrediting their theological and political opponents.

According to Coleman, "papal fundamentalism" or "integralism" denies that there is a "hierarchy of truths even among doctrines" and "makes all statements of the pope and curia equivalently infallible." Although he views its "insidious growth" with alarm, he offers no evidence that such views are held by any significant number of Catholics or even by the handful of groups he labels "integralist." For example, Catholics United for the Faith is identified as a "major actor" in the conflict between Rome and Archbishop Hunthausen, and is said to engage in "extensive correspondence with Vatican offices" regarding sermons, theologians, liturgical practices, and other details of church life. Clearly, Coleman disapproves of such activities, but he fails to explain how they justify labeling CUF "integralist."

Although Coleman claims to distinguish between fundamentalists and "genuine conservatives," of whom he speaks with approval, he offers no concrete examples of the latter, and, as "evidence" of the Wanderer Forum's "integralism" he cites its support for the Nicaraguan *contras* and for a "pro-market economy and conservative politics and politicians."

According to Coleman, neither the pope nor Cardinal Ratzinger is an "integralist," but both "often play, wittingly or not, into the integralists' hands." As "substantiation" he quotes an editorial in the London *Tablet* which asserts that remarks by the pope "could be used to put every kind of teaching on the same level," and refers to "the extreme claims made by John Paul II for the papal teaching authority." Which "remarks" and which "claims" aren't specified.

Innuendo and ad hominem attacks as substitutes for reasoned argument have grown increasingly common in the secular liberal academy, and it's distressing to see such tactics employed by a professor at a Jesuit School of Theology. Furthermore, they should engender skepticism about the validity of Coleman's position.

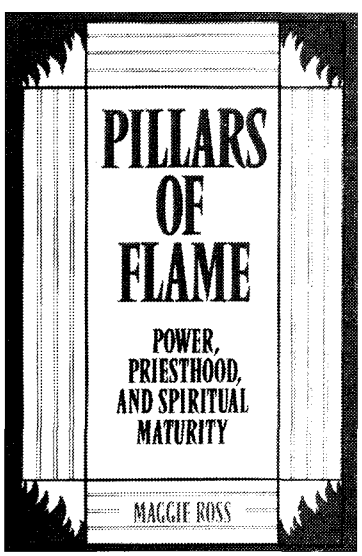
MARY M. ASH

The author replies:

Mary Ash wonders "which remarks" of the pope tend to put every kind of teaching on the same level. She should seek out in *L'Osservatore Romano* the papal speeches for October 15 and November 12, 1988.

My main objection to Catholic neo-integralist groups (besides the obvious fact that they truncate our rich, many-sided Catholic tradition) is their failure in charity. The founder of my religious order, St. Ignatius of Loyola, learned a les-

"A STUNNING BOOK..."*



"...a thoughtful challenge to the dominance of male power in the church. It is a challenge that comes from the spirit and heart and one the reader must take seriously."
—National Catholic Reporter

"Fascinating . . . has revelatory impact." Church Times

"Ross' critique of the hierarchical Church is brilliant and devastating."— Sisters Today

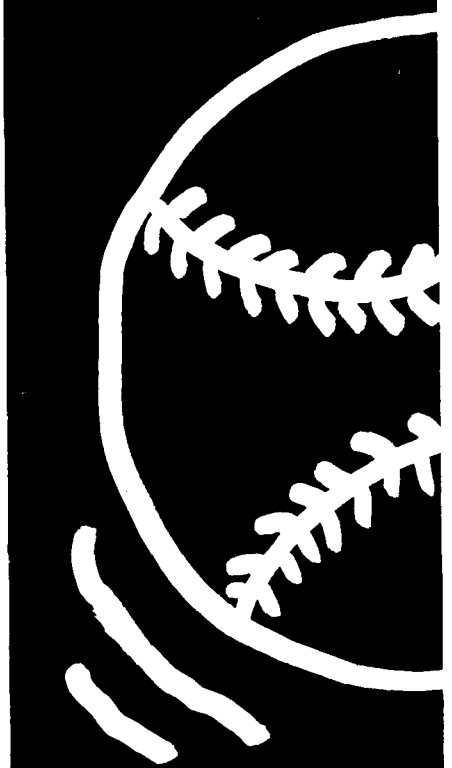
Hardcover, $17.95, 160 pages

Available through your theological bookstore or
Harper & Row, Torch Order Department
P.O. Box 1535, Hagerstown, MD 21741
Or phone TOLL FREE:
800-638-3030 (in MD: 301-824-7300)

Harper & Row
San Francisco

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Championship Season



CATCH IT ALL!

Trial subscription offer:
11 issues for $10

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ 4/21/89

☐ I prefer a full year's subscription at $32

COMMONWEAL

15 Dutch St., New York, N.Y. 10038

son from his mishandling by the Inquisition. Thus, he stipulated as a presupposition for making the spiritual exercises that we should be prepared, when faced with an expression of faith that puzzles us or which we suspect may not be totally orthodox. to put, as a first move, the best interpretation on it, unless we are absolutely compelled to do otherwise. We start with and presuppose trust in one another. Neo-integralist groups such as Catholics United for the Faith start with suspicion! This breaks down the needed atmosphere of mutual trust in the church. Moreover, they bypass the ecclesial rule of Matthew 18: 15-18 which demands that we confront each other directly in charity before going to the whole church (or to the Vatican with denunciations!). It is such bypassing of ordinary ecclesial charity that leads me to label CUF as integralist.

Among genuine conservatives whom I admire or respect I would cite, for starters, Archbishop John R. Quinn and—among Catholic intellectuals—Toronto's J.M. Cameron.

Ms. Ash may think talk of "papal fundamentalism" an invention of progressives. Nothing I've written in recent years has brought to my door so many notes of thanks from Catholic university presidents, bishops, clergy, and laity in this country and abroad. Evidently lots of folks out there think papal fundamentalism is, indeed, a real problem for our church.

In the last paragraph of his letter, Joseph Crumlish discounts appeals to warrants based on human experience (thus, seemingly, throwing away a traditional Catholic—and magisterial—reliance on natural law) and recourse to the *sensus fidelium* (enshrined in one of the oldest Catholic theological formulas, *lex orandi, lex credendi* i.e., we test our doctrine against the spiritual experience and practice of our people). He also belittles the received Catholic view of Scripture as a norm for the church, itself above all other norms (*norma normans non normata* was the classic way of putting it). The magisterium is *normata*, i.e., under the norm of Scripture. Crumlish's letter underscores a point in my article. Don't trust self-proclaimed traditionalists who truncate the tradition to the years 1870-1958.

JOHN A. COLEMAN, S.J.

CLASSIFIED

RATES: 80¢ a word, one time; 76¢ three times; 72¢ six times; Classified payable with order; monthly in advance for more than three times. COMMONWEAL, 15 Dutch St., NYC 10038.

Church Needed

Priest working for Mother Teresa's Sisters and his parish needs church, rectory, etc. Please help: Rev T. McKessack, S.J., 28A Gold Mohar Avenue, Chittaranjan 713331 W.B., India.

Biblical Institutes

24th Biblical Institute, Trinity College, Burlington, Vt. 05401, June 18-23. Faculty: Joseph Agius (Rome), Kenneth Bailey (Jerusalem), Pheme Perkins, Rosemary Ruether. Write: Sister Miriam Ward.

Gathering Place

Attention: *Prayer Groups, Base Communities*. . .THE GATHERING PLACE offers continuing information and inspiration for members of small communities as they reflect on Scripture, gather for prayer, develop techniques for faith sharing, build community, and relate to the larger faith community. Published 5 times annually: Advent/Christmas season, Lent, Easter/Pentecost, and two issues during Ordinary Time. Send $2.00 for current issue or $9.95 for one year subscription to: Gathering Place, Twenty-Third Publications, P.O. Box 180, Mystic, Ct. 06255. Your satisfaction is guaranteed.

ARIL

The Sixth Annual Consultation of the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life presents: "A Faith That Works" with Arthur Waskow, Gregor Goethals, Diana Cates, Giles Milhaven and David Purpel, to be held at Brown University, June 4-7, 1989. For information, write ARIL Consultation, Faunce House, Box 1931, Brown University, Providence, R.I. 02912, or call 401-863-2956

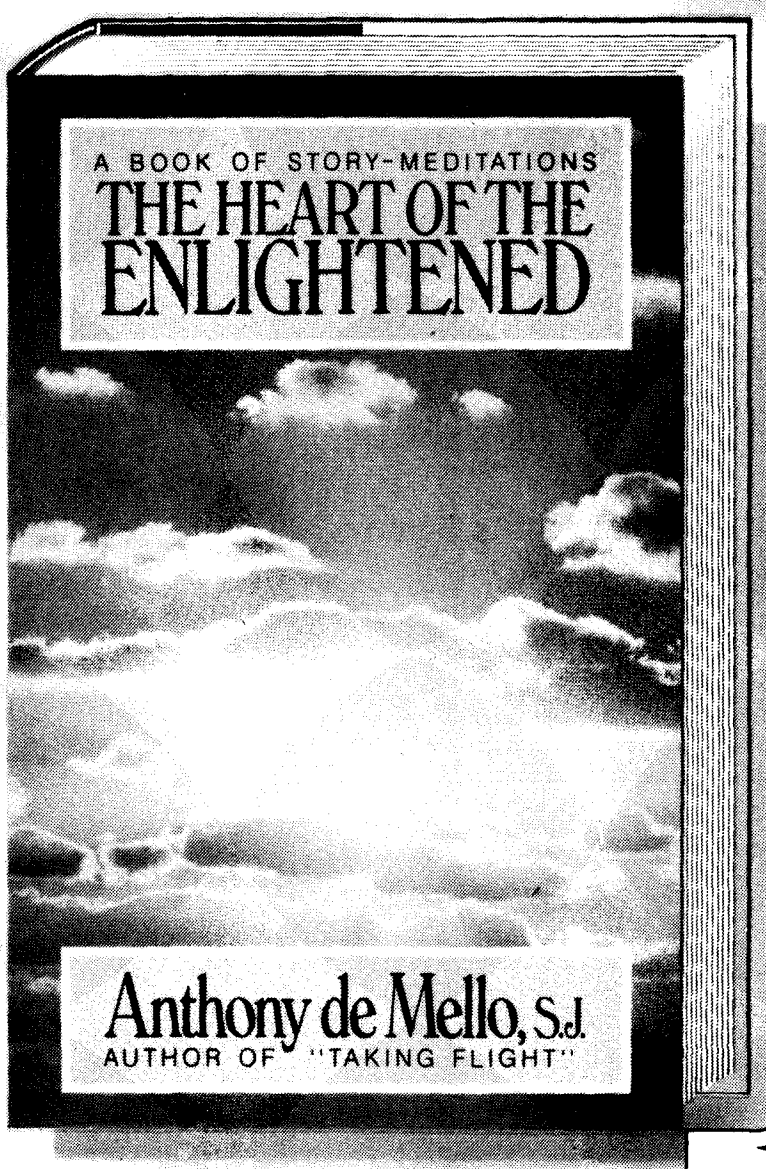
Mary's Pence

Mary's Pence, a channel to redirect our resources directly to those with the least power in our church and society. P.O. Box 29078, Chicago, Ill. 60629-9078, 312-767-1677.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

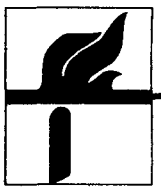
Anthony de Mello's stepping stones to understanding

Continuing the journey begun in *Taking Flight* and *Song of the Bird*, this new treasury of story-meditations from master storyteller and spiritual counselor Anthony de Mello uplifts us and leads us to higher levels of self understanding. A blend of spiritual insight and down-to-earth humor, the quiet power of these 250 stories breaks down our defenses and releases our fears and illusions, freeing us to "see for the first time that which we have always been looking at." Gathered from many cultures, both East and West, they make a transforming, truly joyful reading experience—a living legacy from a master of spiritual guidance.



Doubleday

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Harper & Row

San Francisco

Imagining God

Theology and the Religious Imagination

By Garrett Green

"An important, vigorously and eloquently argued book."—Hans Frei, professor of religious studies, Yale University

Hardcover, 192 pages, $22.95

American Catholic Biblical Scholarship

A History from the Early Republic to Vatican II

By Gerald P. Fogarty, S.J.

"A significant book, calculated to excite all interested in biblical studies, church history, and any number of other fields."
—Joseph Jensen, O.S.B., Executive Secretary, The Catholic Biblical Association

Hardcover, 400 pages, $32.95

Grass Roots Pastors

By Leonard Dochan

The only reference for lay people taking on professional pastoral responsibilities, this book provides theological and practical guidance.

Paperback, 160 pages, $10.95

Pillars of Flame

Power, Priesthood, and Spiritual Maturity

By Maggie Ross

"A stunning book. . . . A thoughtful challenge to the dominance of male power in the Church. It is a challenge that comes from the spirit and heart and one the reader must take seriously."—*National Catholic Reporter*

Hardcover, 160 pages, $17.95

The Praxis of Christian Experience

An Introduction to the Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx

Edited by Robert J. Schreiter and Mary Catherine Hilkert

"I know of no better compendium of [Schillebeeckx's] thought."—John A. Coleman, S.J., professor of religion and society, Jesuit School of Theology and Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California

Hardcover, 176 pages, $18.95

Educating in Faith

Maps and Visions

By Mary C. Boys

"Mary C. Boys has emerged as one of the leading religious educators in North America. This comprehensive `map of the field' will be welcomed by specialists and nonspecialists alike."—Richard P. McBrien, Crowley-O'Brien-Walter Professor of Theology, University of Notre Dame

Hardcover, 288 pages, $21.95

The Diaconate

A Full and Equal Order

By James M. Barnett

"An important contribution for those churches seeking to restore the dignity and vocation of the ordained ministry of deacons."—Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., Church Divinity School of the Pacific

Paperback, 230 pages, $11.95

Available through your theological bookstore or
Harper & Row, Torch Order Department
P.O. Box 1535, Hagerstown, MD 21741
Or phone toll free: **800-638-3030** (in MD: **301-824-7300**)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED